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the calvert review

the University of Maryland

FALL 63





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Drawing above by Jim Forbes

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the
calvert
review

vol. 1 no. 1

CONTENTS

PROSE

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 4 | SAMMY | by Susan Leibovitz |
| 8 | FALL | by Michael Mewshaw |
| 12 | THE NEWSPAPER BOY | by Bruce Sidwell |
| 15 | THE HOTTEST STAND EVER BUILT | by John Hollifield |
| 22 | BLUNT THE LION'S PAW | by Arthur Vogelsang |
| 26 | RETURN | by Diana Lady |
| 28 | ALAN GOES TO THE LIBRARY | by Sidney Rosenberg |
| 30 | TORING HIS BELL | by Michael Mewshaw |
| 37 | GOIN' SOUTH, KALEB | by Thomas Nugent |
| 46 | RAILROAD TIE | by Jon Hur |
| 54 | WALPURGISNACHT | by L. T. Grant |
| 60 | DARK SURF | by Dick Behraman |

POETRY

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 7 | Lines Written at High Tide | by Nancy Davidson |
| 7 | After Working on a Geriatric Ward | by Nancy Davidson |
| 9 | Behind the Mask | by Marcia Stickle |
| 10 | 12 Poems | by Michael Gura |
| 14 | Seeing is When I Am Alone | by Stephanie Davis |
| 20 | The Tree | by Mary Slayton |
| 29 | "I" | by Arlene Roemer |
| 41 | Alchemy | by Evelyn Barbara Edelson |
| 47 | Voices | by Kay Grimes |
| 49 | A Loved a Long the Riverrun | by Walter Daniel Kuhne |
| 52 | The Comrade | by Peter Laska |
| 58 | 5 Poems | by Patricia Leist |
| 64 | Awards | |

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University of Maryland

It was warm for early spring. As his mother drove off in the family stationwagon, seven-year-old Sammy took off his jacket and kicked it toward the house. Floop, it landed short of its goal. With the drive of a football player seeing his opening, Sammy surged forward and with one more mighty kick sent it flying between the imaginary goal posts and onto the porch.

Now Sammy was free to do whatever he wanted. His mother had taken his older sisters, Louise and Claire, and the baby, Lynn, shopping with her. His older brother, Mark, was off working a friend's ham radio set. If his father were home, Sammy and he would have gone on their regular Saturday shopping trip together for new car tires, grass seed or maybe a washing machine part. His father, however, was at an Air Force radar station on top of the Atlas Mountains. The Atlas Mountains were in Africa—the top part of the map; he knew because his father had shown him before he left. He had also reminded Sammy to be a good boy before he left, and to help Mommy. Although it was hard, Sammy really tried, but sometimes he just forgot.

"Zoom," he shrieked, running in circles with his arms spread out. "Zoom!"

When he grew up he was going to fight wars like his father had done. He was going to fly rockets to the moon, or at least fly jets over Russia. After all, he could tell anyone who asked the names of every single American war—in order!

He zoomed right across the street and into Neil's yard.

"Hi ya, Neil. Want to play 'army'?"

"Nope," replied Neil who was sprawled out on the weedy lawn. His bluejeans had splotchy green stains spread over the knees.

"Want to bicycle to the creek that has quicksand in it?"

"Nope." Neil had done all that before. Lazily, he began to pull out the few blades of grass in the lawn.

"What 'cha want to do then?" asked Sammy while joining in on the lawn's destruction by kicking up tufts with the tips of his shoes.

"Aw, I don't know."

"I know!" A smile crossed Sammy's face and came to stay at the corners of his

mouth. "Let's hike to the shopping center."

"All the way there?" Neil was a disbeliever. "By ourselves?"

"Sure, it's not far," Sammy tugged at Neil's arm. "I'm not chicken. Are you?"

"Course not!" Bouncing up, Neil darted across the lawn and beat Sammy in a race across the street.

The two friends walked, ran, and skipped side by side through backyards and onto the sidewalk of the main road to the shopping center. They'd never gone there by themselves before, but the temptation was too sweet to resist. In walking down the road, pausing every once in a while to look at this or that or to see who could jump the farthest, they looked like any other seven-year-old boys: their pants drooped, their shoe-laces were undone and their noses were red from being rubbed on their shirt sleeves.

Through spurts of energy mixed with delicious slowness, they had at last reached their destination. There was no decision to make as to which store was to be visited first. They both ran toward the Super Discount Drug Store with its uncountable treasures: Roy Rogers school tablets, marbles, baseballs and model airplanes.

"This way," yelled Sammy, running down an aisle.

"No, this way," yelled Neil, running down another.

"Oomph!" Sammy had bumped into an elderly woman standing at the prescription counter.

"'Cuse me," he offered as a running apology without looking back at the stunned woman.

"Why don't parents keep hold of their children nowadays?" she muttered to the unhearing druggist who kept right on working in his colored-bottle world.

Sammy saw them first—the plastic soldiers. He stopped and picked up a handful. Carefully he set them up on the floor next to the counter. The Minuteman had just shot the Rebel in Gray when Neil came and was tugging at Sammy's sleeve again.

"Come on, Sammy," he urged. "Ya gotta see this. It's great."

"What is it? Can't 'cha see I'm busy?"

"This is better. Come on!"

Sammy weakened, "Oh, o.k." He gathered

up the tiny men and threw them back onto the counter, following Neil across to the other aisle.

"Here it is," said Neil, stopping in front of the toy guns. "D-eh-eh-eh! You're dead!" In his hand was a small black plastic pistol.

"Is that all?" demanded Sammy, irritated at having left the soldiers for such a stupid looking gun.

"But, look," pointed out Neil, showing Sammy the gun's butt, "It's really a water pistol."

"Yeh?" Now Sammy was interested. "Let's fill it and see if it works."

"We can't—not here," Neil reminded him, "but we could if we took it."

"Without paying?"

"Sure. The store's got plenty. It doesn't need this one more."

"Yeah," agreed Sammy, "and it is kind of small, anyways."

"O.k.," said Neil, "put it in your pocket."

"Mine?"

"Yeah, and let's go home. My mom doesn't know where I am. I'm gonna get into trouble."

So Sammy stuffed the gun into his back pocket, unaware of the shadow cast on the floor beside him by the salesman.

Neil was already heading for the door.

"Hey! Wait for me," shouted Sammy, but the hand on his shoulder and fear stopped him from moving.

"Just where do you think you're going?" It was the salesman. His wide, oily face glared down at Sammy. "Let's have that water gun."

"It's mine," lied Sammy, trying to cover up his crime. He was afraid to look up at the towering man.

"Oh, yeah?" said the man, pulling the gun out of Sammy's pocket himself. "Do you like it better with a price tag on it?"

Sammy could say nothing. All he could do was wonder where Neil was. He desperately wanted to get away from this man. He wished that he had stayed at home and never thought of the hike.

"I ought to call the cops on you," the salesman threatened. "They'd throw you in jail, throw away the key, and you'd never get out."

Still Sammy could say nothing. His throat was dry, but he had to fight the tears that were building up in his eyes. He just wanted to be able to leave. He didn't want to go to

jail. He wanted to go home.

The man was writing something down on a pad that he'd taken out of his pocket. "What's your name, kid?"

Afraid to do otherwise, Sammy told him.

"Does your mother know that you're here?"

"N...no," Sammy managed to utter. He could hold them back no longer; his tears fell straight from his bent head to minute lakes on the floor.

"Well, kid," he said, tearing a piece of paper from the pad and shoving it into Sammy's unwanting hand, "Give this to your mother. It's my phone number. And you'd better have her call...if you don't want the cops to get you!"

As he turned to walk away, Sammy seized his opportunity for freedom and ran for the door.

"Don't forget!" the man yelled after him. "Or else it's the cops!"

Sammy didn't stay to see the salesman flip the toy gun back onto the counter and turn, laughing, toward his cash register.

* * * * *

Exhausted, Sammy fell onto the porch steps to catch his breath. He had run almost all the way home, pausing only to look back in fear of having been followed. Now, on home territory, he felt temporarily safe—safe from the salesman and the police, but not from his mother's forthcoming wrath. Boy, was he going to get it. The worst thought was that his mother would write to his father about this. He'd do anything, if only she wouldn't write to his daddy. He didn't even worry about the police because he knew that his mother would call the salesman. She'd fix everything up as far as that went.

Coming up the sidewalk to the house was his older brother Mark. Fifteen years old and already six feet tall, he was badly in need of a haircut. His hands were full of radio books and boxes of tubes.

"Get out of my way, will ya!" he yelled at Sammy. "You're going to make me drop something."

"Try to make me," taunted Sammy. "I can stay here if I want."

But, one close-flying kick by Mark, and Sammy ran around the house to the back door.

Just then he heard the car pull into the driveway; his mother was home. He slouched against the wall and listened. The car doors slammed, and his mother was giving directions to the girls to help bring in the things from the car.

"Mark! Mark!" she yelled. "Come on out and help us."

Doors opened; voices pushed; doors closed; and all was quiet once more. They were all in the house. He had to go in.

Sliding back the glass door, he stuck his head inside. His mother was busy unloading groceries from a brown paper bag.

"Well," she said, seeing him standing there half-in and half-out of the doorway, "What have you been doing all day? Did you have fun?"

Noticing something funny in his facial expression, she questioned him. "There isn't anything wrong, is there? Come on, Sammy, what did you break this time?"

He walked through the doorway and into the room.

"Well, come on, Sammy," his mother insisted. "Let's have it."

He couldn't look into his mother's face. His nose twitched, and he drew large, then larger circles on the floor with the tip of his shoe. Then it broke loose—a tidal wave of words. He blurted out the whole story: the hike, the store, the gun, and the fearsome salesman. His words were sometimes too fast, his sentences too incoherent, his voice too low, but Sammy knew that his mother fully comprehended what crime he had committed.

"Boy!" said nine-year-old Claire, "You're a crook!"

"You're a stupid dope," thirteen-year-old Louise had her comment to make. "A real jerk! Wait 'til Daddy hears about this!"

"Shut-up!" screamed Sammy, as he began to slug away at her with all his pent-up fury. "You're not my mother!"

"Stop it. Stop it immediately!" his mother yelled, pulling him away. "Go upstairs, and I'll talk to you later."

"But," begged Sammy, "You've got to call the man first. If you don't, I'll go to jail."

"Well," she asked, "Where's the number?"

"It's right here," said Sammy, digging into his pocket—but it wasn't. All he could feel was the before-forgotten hole at its bot-

tom.

"I lost it!" Panic spread over him. "I lost it!"

"It probably wasn't important anyway," the mother said, "Unless there's something else that you haven't told me."

"No," Sammy assured her. "No. But he'll send the cops after me, if you don't call. He said so!"

"Nonsense. Now go upstairs," she insisted.

"Please, Mommy, please call," he begged.

"What a stupe!" inserted Mark.

"Leave him alone," warned the mother. "Go upstairs, Sammy. That's enough for now."

He turned and went toward the stairway. Looking back, he saw them all staring at him. Only the baby, Lynn, was oblivious to his guilt. Slowly, he climbed the stairs, hoping to be called back down. He wasn't.

In his room he ran for the shelter of his bed and crawled under the covers. He'd never come out again; the cops would never find him here. Then, he bet, Mark or Louise would probably show them where he was. He shivered; the pillow was wet. He didn't want to cry, but somehow he couldn't stop. He didn't want to go to jail. He didn't. He fell asleep.

The dreams were unbearable. Every misty corner where he turned had a policeman waiting for him. He ran and ran and ran. Once he thought that he was safe in his father's arms when he looked up to see it was the salesman instead.

"No...no!" he screamed, waking himself up. It took a long time for him to fall back to sleep; the darkness was full of grasping enemies.

The next day was Sunday, and the shopping center was closed. He could not, however, erase the threatening shadow of arrest from his mind. The coming of night increased his worries until he was afraid to go to sleep—afraid of what waited to grab him in his dreams. Finally exhaustion took its toll, and he fell into another restless nightmare-filled sleep.

This time he was in jail, and the salesman led him out before a firing squad. He was all set to die as the plastic soldiers fired their guns, but he didn't. They had used water pistols; he just got wet. Waking with a start, he realized that he had wet his

pajamas.

The next morning he knew what he had to do. He would never be able to sleep again if he didn't. Saying good-bye to his mother with his school lunch-box in hand, he headed toward the shopping center, not the school.

The closer he got, the faster he walked, until he was racing. He couldn't stop. He had to tell the salesman that it wasn't his fault. He had to tell him. Stop the cops. Not go to jail. Not to die. The tension mounted within him until he felt ready to explode. He burst into the store. There was the same monstrous salesman; he was waiting on a customer.

Sammy rushed up to him, "Please," he

began, begging.

"Not now. I'm busy," said the salesman.

"Please don't," cried Sammy; his head was pounding.

"Look, kid, I'm busy!"

Sammy couldn't take it any longer. "My Mommy won't call! My Mommy won't call!" he screamed and screamed until the scalding tears of relieved frustration poured down and down in limitless torrents. "My Mommy won't call," he sobbed.

The salesman glanced from his customer down to the face of the hysterical little boy at his side.

"Look, kid," he said, "I don't know who the hell you are, and I don't know who the hell your mother is. Get lost, will ya."

LINES WRITTEN AT HIGH TIDE

by Nancy Davidson

I know now why the sea is called a woman,
Though it took the wisdom of a man to name her.
It is because she has her tides.

Her waters lap up soft on the supporting shore
And then shrink back into herself
As if she seeks to take back
All she has ever given.

My Love, patient as the broad, bright land,
Endure my ebb and flo.

Even as I go, I will return again.

I am a woman as the sea—and can do no other.

AFTER WORKING ON A GERIATRIC WARD

by Nancy Davidson

Time is the most unmalleable material.
Is it possible to work an intricate design
Facing only a fragment at a time,
Unable to change the last hammer stroke,
Or to propose the next,
Or guide the whole, or know its scope?
And at the end—which may come in the middle—
We may be left with far too little
To describe that bit of beauty we had planned,
Or worse, have a great white hulk left over.

His four o'clock class in English Literature ended; Dr. Grace slowly made his way toward his office on the second floor. He trudged up the well worn stairs of the musty-smelling hall, his right foot dragging slightly. Dr. Grace was not lame, yet one morning ten years ago a student asked if he had twisted an ankle, and it was then that he noticed he was limping.

At one time the professor tried to walk regularly, but the limp persisted. Now, every time he saw the foot scraping along behind like an old man, he reminded himself that it was just a habit he must someday break.

As he continued, Dr. Grace pulled a badly bent cigarette from his breast pocket. Then, sticking his books beneath one arm, he checked his pants for a match. It took him several seconds and three matches to light up.

He reached the second floor and gazed over the rims of his glasses, spying Dr. Richmond of the History Department at the far end of the hall. Raising and extending his arm slightly, Dr. Grace gave an all but imperceptible wave of his hand. When he received no greeting in return, he reasoned that his colleague must have been looking in the opposite direction. Also, he decided he was too far away for a verbal salutation, and so plodded on into his office.

The dull cubicle was small and crowded with a desk, a filing cabinet, and two swivel chairs. Atop the four battered pieces of furniture dozens of paperbacks, plays, and critiques lay scattered. An illegibly inscribed honorary degree hung in a thin black frame over the desk. A long, narrow window, tightly shut for years, squinted colorlessly in the wall. The room was permeated by the odor of aged, molding papers.

Dr. Grace cleared the books from the chairs and seated himself in the one nearest the desk; he sat motionless for a moment, then cleared a small section of the desk, too, exposing its scarred, stained surface. Every day from four to five, Dr. Grace held his office hour, although it was seldom that a student took advantage of his faithful routine.

Slowly he turned in the chair to stare out the window, leisurely smoking his cigarette and depositing the ashes in his trouser cuff. When he had taken one last drag, he mashed

it out on the sole of his shoe. Then he stood and shuffled toward the window. Between the sill and the frame was a small round hole into which Dr. Grace dropped his used smokes. He had been doing so for longer than he could remember, and he surmised that somewhere between the plaster board and the masonry there must be quite a pile of butts.

After disposing of his cigarette, he gazed out at a small quadrangle below. There was a stamp of lawn, and on the low brick wall about it sat a young boy and girl. Their lips and heads moved in sprightly animation, bubbling with laughter and persiflage, unheard by the professor. The girl delicately threw back her head at the something the boy whispered, and her thin throat rose, exposed, soft, white, and her dancing hair caught the sparkling honey of the autumn sun.

Dr. Grace leaned forward and touched his brow to the window pane. It was cool.

The quintessence of enamored adolescence. Not too long ago...I. She. And now? What did that fellow say to his friend? "I've got old Dr. Grace." Fifty-four years. Old. That's proof. Proofrock.

Come and go then, you.....I. She. Against the sky. Certain places. Our place. By the river. Down by the river side. riverrun past Adam's Eve. Cool, soft, green. All in green. Softer than slippers sleep. But Fall. Brown golden-red leaves fleeing our feet. Where are the songs of? "Here dear." Joy! A thing of beauty. Round, soft, golden. A peach? Should I? Again, "Here John. The leaves. Look." Goldengrove unleaving.

Fall. Spring. The things of man. Shall grow erect once again. Fall down. "John." On the shores by the sea. river-run. Proof. Lies. Etherized. Her eyes. Prove? All the pleasures. Can I bear my heart? Bare. Blushing. A red, red, rose. "My love!" Come gather ye. Come gather. "Come." To be drunk among whispers. Beautiful. Looking well. Will? When? "Now, John." I went silently into that. Good night! Worlds of wanwood. Belief. Leafmeal. Living, some call it. My heart fell dead. Songs. Where are the? Spring. Fall.

Care for? Can You? Go then! Where?
The sun. Nevermore. Lies. Quoth the
raven. A thing of beauty. "Now, John."
Nevermore. Foreverfall.
"Doctor Grace?" He jerked his head from
the window. A short, thin boy stood framed

in the doorway.

"Doctor, may I see you a minute? It's
about today's lecture."

"Sure, sure," answered the professor
nervously, dragging his foot, making for the
desk.

BEHIND THE MASK

by Marcia Stickle

Behind the mask
There is no face
Only a landscape
Aspect of the state of things

And I poised between two visions
Remove their masks
Walls holding seas of images back
With the removal
A dialogue ensues
Two worlds merge and fuse
The seas surge reflections
Into each other's eyes

Beneath the stark-winter moon
A lonely park is tangled
In the dark angles of its trees
* * *

Beneath the summer sun floats
A garden alive with light
Leaves of children's laughter
Twittering on its branches

The aspects cross until
Moon on left
Sun on right
Within the overlapping
There is a symmetry

And I walk between
Not knowing which to choose
Which to refuse
Rejoicing in the ambiguity

MICHAEL GURA

SHE'LL NEVER GLITTER WITH THE JEWELS OF KINGS

She'll never glitter with the jewels
of kings. What walking brings,
in sight of trees and streams and sky,
of clicks and chitters wandered by,
she wears with pride upon her breast.
No, content she'll never rest
in this man's life with tools,
with manmade things. No sparkling rings
are hers. Her fingers, bare of metal,
live alone to feel the petal,
stroke the grass, and turn the page.
And when at last the brown of age
spreads like a burn across her face,
she'll be as wise as ageless skies,
while jewels that glittered in the sun
will savagery will go to someone
else. She shall, like patterned lace,
show soft design upon her face,
upon her hands, upon her breast.
She'll not be dragged away to rest,
her fingers clutching at her nest.

At night I cheek the side of my couch;
smiling, I rub my skin
gently to and fro against the fabric
as though it is your warm blouse I nuzzle.
And my lips are two prayer-beads pressed
beseechingly to the cloth as though their devotion
might transform the taste of bitter dacron to sweet flesh.
I am immersed in the flow of the night
as though within streaming, stiff molasses;
how sticky-sweet each suffocating breath
in the long, slow passage to the day.

As love rears darkly up before
our newly-opened eyes,
our quiet, searching hands instruct
each other in fear's ties.

Today I saw a young man
seated alone by a pile of closed books.
His hands were bent-clenched like the claws
of an eaglet puffy with its first wet feathers.

I should have cried to see him there.
I should have let him know I felt
his stare like grappling-hooks plunging in me;
I should have stroked his downy cheek

with a soft-hard glance. But none of these.
I started once at his quivering fierceness
and went stumbling away, an ugly feeling
of burning dismay purpling my woodening face.

I have filled my baskets with apples today
in the market-place of misery.
The juice is sweet upon the tongue,
but drops of crystal poison run
like jewelled spiders to my stomach.
What the rack—and what the pain—
that could drive you—or me—insane?
Not these apples' nourishment;
the hurt but draws to firmament.
These apples' seeds I gently tuck
in heavy loam to grow to trees.

At last my friends and enemies
will come to market to buy from me
the sweet red fruit of misery.

The pain will wear
and flake away
so that, perhaps,
another day

I'll stand inside
a ring of rust
and say that
try again I must.

HIS WORST MOMENT

I wish my touch were leprosy;
then I would touch you—oh, so gently—
upon the ruby portals of your lips
and the creamy plain of your throat.
As time caressed you, and you took note
of your ruin and of the disgust which rips
you from me as being really of some merit
and worthy of contemplation, you would hate as I see fit.

We both know nature dressed in green.
My eyes, as yours, see clean white running water stream
through pillowed beds of orange clay.
We both see children dart this way
and that in Springtime's sparkling play.

But once again the telescope
whines slowly up a silken slope
of metal in my memory.
The hum of the observatory
fills my ears. The eyepiece drops
before my face and stops.
I see the crimson planet Mars,
a-streak with lines in distant haze,
and know that there are many ways of vision.
There are sturdy bars between us
that shall never break. The trees,
the stream, the whining top
between the fingers of the boy
who sits intently on the ground
before us brings a sigh of joy
from me but not a sound from you.
I laugh and hug the earth to me.
You sob, your head on your knee.
And Mars, in a view a-stud with stars,
is as near me as what you see.

Way above there is a great cloud,
knotted as fingers in despair,
creating an evening from the noon sky,
shadowing my face where I lie,
outstretched numbly against a cool sheet.

My friend's neck has not bowed
her head to her pillow, nor does she stare
at shadow-suppled fingers through the mid-day gloom.
There are three lights burning in her room,
casting metallic glow in lieu of day—
she imagines this black day mercurially fleet.

Now I'm two people in one.
I am what I was and I'll be.
I say what I yesterday said,
but it deeply embarrasses me.

RECOGNITION

I aired my vision in the street
to take it far away
from duties pressing at its life
all of the livelong day.

Two artists stood beneath a tree.
They watched me and concurred
the brittle features of my face
were of the common herd.

If my new face is but a mask
upon a wooden frame
which rests upon another face
that also bears my name,

and if the face that lurks beneath
is made of flesh and blood,
and if the face upon the frame
is made of molded mud,

then I will stand before a glass
and with my fingers tear
at me until the mirror shows
me real in my despair.

It begins the usual way. I amble down to the corner swinging my newspaper bag. The late fall sun feels warm and friendly on my face. Somehow I know it will be a good day, a full day. The routeman is there in his panel truck counting out my papers. As I approach, he swings out the newspaper bundle. It catches me in the leg. An end of a wire clutches my skin and makes a slight tearing sound. A thin dribble of blood lazily exudes from the open wound. "Sorry," grunts Routeman from behind his moustache, which is palpitating from inadequately suppressed giggles. Like to kick him in his gently flaccid face so that furry teeth fly in every far-flown direction. But be still my much-charged soul, be still. Do not let petty emotion taint your brain. You have a job to do. Routeman drives on, chortling. Wound hurts, but I have no time for selfish ordinary tasks. It will wait till I am finished with my job. Count out the papers for the first load and put them in the waiting newsbag. Lift my bag to my shoulders. Now, I start my way down the street, folding papers as I go. My hurt hampers my walking, but it becomes easy to go on when I know I have an important job to do. 707 Devonshire Road, 706, 708; the houses roll by; a newspaper securely nestled on the porch of each address. The numbers go on. The pain is great; perhaps I might stop for a moment; the newsbag rubs so against the split flesh. Plebeian Ass! How frail is man—Suppress they selfish desires—A job is to be done—The news must be carried to the people—It is the imperative! All else is dust in the face of the one great task: The people must know the truth!

The numbers reel by; 719 Auburn Avenue, 717, 716, 714, 712. I walk in a fog, mesmerized by housefronts, sidewalks, gates and the sun which sears my brow and face.

On I trudge; the bag becomes lighter; but my leg gains an agonizing pound on every step.

At last the first load is through! Count the papers for the second load. Do not stop. Remember what it is you do. You carry the news to the people, and the people must know the truth if they are to remain a free and happy people. "The newspaper is the watchdog of democracy." The journalism teacher of my early days has said it is so, and thus it must be, as the word of the teacher cannot be questioned.

On I travel. Housefront upon housefront passes me by, each etched into my memory from a thousand days back of my conveyance to that door of The Truth.

Friends ask me why I do it. They say, "You are thirty-four years old. Surely you can find a better job. You have not married. Perhaps you could if you would take a better paying job. You are wasting your life as a newsboy." But I only smile and turn away. They are but blind materialistic fools. They cannot see the scope, the importance, the sheer magnitude of what I do. But it is no matter. Only the informing of the masses is of consequence.

Ah! Here are the children! They love the news carrier and always wish to play with me. Today, however, I have no time, for the wound has slowed my pace and stolen my time for games. Still, they beg me to stay, hang on my legs and arms, gently trying to make me stop. Jovially I tell them to quit. Still they persist, and again, but less jovially, I tell them I must go...I have not been strong enough with my voice; perhaps if I put more authority into it...And yet still they play, hanging on my arms, my newsbag, my legs. Even now one takes a newspaper from the bag, a mischievous, elfish smile on his little round face. He is a beautiful child. HE HAS TORN THE PAPER.....It is over now; their broken bodies lie scattered about. The paper is retrieved. It was not easy to do to the children, but it had to be done. Perhaps I can make it up to their parents if I tell why it was necessary; but somehow they never seem really to understand.

On I go. I am finished with the second load. Count the papers for the third load. Again I lift the bag to my shoulders. Then I notice that my shoe on the injured leg is stained a shimmering auburn—Oh God! I wish I could stop! The pain...like fire searing through each cell....How selfish is man; filled only with thoughts of himself. Let it not be so with me, for I have a job to do.

A black demon on a motorcycle careens around the corner, missing me by a whisper of black smoke and squealing tires. "Black Bully!" I shriek, but it is lost in the wind...Wind! Fear closes my throat. I drop my bag and run back to the papers nestled on the porches where the satanic wind already has begun to tear capriciously at corners and folds

of the pages of The Truth. Some pages have even been wantonly scattered across lawns like so many Autumn leaves. Lungs bursting, leg burning with pain; I replace each paper inside a door, in a mailbox, under a mat. Finally that part of my work is done and the wind is thwarted. Back I go to the newspaper bag and begin my task anew. I have learned my lesson. From this time forth, no matter what the weather, I shall always take the extra precautions against my enemy, the wind. True, it takes an extra hour; but what is an hour in the face of The Truth.

On I traverse from house to house, street to street, making the populace aware of the happenings of the day; making them know of a new wedding, a welcoming, a wreck; some new birth, ballad, or bomb; making them see the world through a newspaper; making them know The Truth.

Onward. Up steps, through gates. Ever onward. The flies and gnats have found my wound now but I cannot flick them away because I cannot reach over my newspaper bag and I dare not stop. Now comes a mongrel dog gently licking at my hand. I scratch his back. He sees my wound. His eyes grow strange, possessed by a cold hatred and fear.

He snaps at my hand and backs off, his rough, brownish coat bristling. A speck of saliva appears hanging, threatening at the edge of his mouth which now has rolled into a low snarl curling around harsh, gleaming fangs. A tremor of terror runs coldly through my bowels. He leaps, jaws aiming for my throat. I dodge and crack the foot of my good leg into his neck. He lies still, eyes glazed. A trickle of blood gently oozes from the corner of his mouth and flows to the ground where it mingles with the dust. My leg wound is wider than before. It extends the length of my thigh. Blood has rusted my pants and shoes.

Damn the flies! So sticky, the blood, like a red glue. My leg feels strange, almost numb. God, so tired; can hardly breathe. The air is so thick and weighted.

I stumble on. I slip on some gravel and fall heavily on my wounded leg. Cinders and bits of broken glass are ground deep into the cut sending shoots of pain throughout my enervated body. But I can finish. I have only a little farther to go. In a few minutes I will be done. Finally the last paper is delivered. I have completed my task again. The people have been made to know the truth for another day. Democracy is still safe.



CHILDREN

Emory Kristof

"SEEING IS WHEN I AM ALONE"

by Stephanie Davis

Seeing is when I am alone.
Like shadows cooling a soft red earth
Cool green-brown twigs and dead leaves
A faded buttercup.
Here, with only myself and everything that made me
My world
My torn red earth, and my blue sky.
Mine because my brush made it, my paint.

This morning,
Someone said, "Hey girl, that isn't real.
Why do you paint like that?
Things don't look like that."
This morning,
Maybe it feels like that.
Emptiness when you are sick from whiskey
Or night loneliness in a front seat going home,
Arm around shoulder, voice, eyes next to you touching,
Only miles away and alone,
Or cold winds off the ocean in October,
Feel like that.

What is real
Snow?
Secret places in the fields and woods back home
Or in alleys behind ugly buildings?
What is real, the places, or the secrets there?
I paint the secrets
And the places are no longer important
I talk to you through your eyes
The only language I know
Because I must and you must see.

This afternoon,
No more whispers behind me, no more questions why.
The secrets are too hard to forget
Easier not to see at all.
And seeing is still when I am alone.

THE HOTTEST STAND EVER BUILT

by John Hollifield

The yard of Ralph Sawatki's house is enclosed by untrimmed green hedges which are now almost five feet tall. Ralph has clipped them exactly five times since he and Darlene moved into the house three years ago. Each spring, when the hedges are sprouting and rising, Ralph has something more important to do than clip hedges. He has a carnival stand which must be whipped into shape for the summer circuit.

This summer is to be the big one. He is planning to make a special trip to Atlanta in order to catch on with one of the most successful carnivals in the business, a carnival which has particular meaning for him, the carnival that his mother and father were with for more than twenty years.

He and Jack have been working for over a month in the front yard, and the stand is almost complete. All Ralph has to do is put five bolts in to attach the stand to the frame which will then be attached to the trailer. He whistles, the bolts in his hand, and squats down beside the frame. Jack is putting the spare wood and pipe back into the shed in the rear of the house, and Ralph thinks for a moment how great it is to have Jack with him this year instead of having to hire someone you don't know who is only after what he can get for himself.

Ralph tries to fit one of the bolts into a hole and finds that the hole in the stand doesn't match. Everything was going so smooth, he thinks. So smooth, almost done, the first episode of the dream almost complete. He squats there beside the stand, the bolts in his hand, and he stares at the mis-drilled holes. So close, so close. Goddamn, Goddamn, Goddamn, oh you rotten bastard, why can't things be right sometimes, why can't something be easy for once, why, why, and there is a ten-pound sledgehammer in his hands and tears in his eyes as he swings it, splintering and crunching the wood, clanging on the pipe, and one wild swing puts a bend in the trailer axle. He doesn't realize he is shouting until Jack has him by the arms and Darlene's screams are louder than his. Inside the house the baby is crying because Darlene was feeding him when all the noise started, and when she jumps up suddenly and rushes away from him, confusion and fear engulf him as he sits alone in his highchair.

Angry tears, futile tears run down his reddening face.

"Stop it, Jesus Christ, stop it," Jack yells, as he runs over and grabs Ralph's arms, makes him drop the sledgehammer. Ralph is shaking. He sees what he has done and that desperate feeling jumps up into his throat, forcing his breath to come in jagged bursts.

Ralph is not unused to this feeling. Jack has seen him like this before and can understand, but Darlene stands transfixed. During the three years they have been married, she has had only quick glimpses of the violence which is now bare, in full force, before her. She has heard the ugly rumors many times, but always chose to disbelieve them. Now she believes every word she ever heard and even the rumors that she knows couldn't be true. In one brief moment she feels her life shattered. She feels the pieces fall under the rage of this man, her husband, who is now looking at her, his curly black hair wildly disarranged, his forehead sweat-smeared, his eyes large and red.

She is a slight girl, twenty-three years old, with thin dirty-blonde hair and cute freckled face. But she isn't cute now with the knowledge of a wrecked life on her face. Ralph is staring at her. She remembers the story about a party he had given. This is not a clear remembrance of step by step details, but only a lightning flash remembrance which crashes through her mind in one single image of Ralph savagely striking Jack over the head with a beer bottle because Jack had left the party without telling him. This is the Ralph she sees now, in front of her and in her mind, and she turns and runs into the house, into the kitchen. She doesn't know what she is doing, scared, but not of the present so much as her vivid picture of the future and what might happen. Still she is automatically tender with the baby, she holds him in her arms, soothing him, shushing him into quietness punctuated by gasps for breath. He is puzzled but will not cry as long as she holds him and whispers to him. She carries him through the house aimlessly, a tiny girl with a giant of a one-year-old on her hip. So often she has been told that it isn't good for her to have to carry the baby all the time—he is too big for you to carry, people

tell her. He is a healthy baby with arms and legs wrinkled by fat and bright eyes that are now wide and confused. He isn't too big for her, she thinks. She is used to his bigness and is always surprised when someone lifts him and grunts and carries on about his weight.

She doesn't know what to do now. She is glad the baby is there for her to anchor herself to. His solidity in her arms is a comfort, and having to keep him calm makes her calm herself. She puts him back in the highchair. She was feeding him fruit dessert when Ralph interrupted everything, and now she gives him the rest of the jar. She wipes his face and lets him sit there while she puts his bottle on and waits for it to heat. In her impatience she does not let it heat as long as usual and she gives it to him almost cold and puts him in his crib and stands back and watches him suck happily on the nipple. He still likes his bottle. She wonders when she should start trying to take him off the bottle but decides that it really doesn't matter, not for a while yet anyway.

Even in his sleep he hangs onto that nipple. Darlene takes the bottle from him and turns him over on his stomach. The doctor said that she should never have any trouble if the baby slept on his back, but little Ralph always wakes up with gas pains if she leaves him on his back.

It is getting dark outside. Darlene draws the Venetian blinds shut and the bedroom seems to shrink in size. They have lived here for three years and she has cleaned this bedroom and made this bed every day of that time. Now she stares at the bed and walks over to it and bends down and grasps the corner of the pink bedspread in her hand. Slowly she straightens and walks backward until the bedspread pulls off the bed and drags on the floor. She walks over it, feels the soft material under her feet. The pillows she simply brushes off the other side of the bed onto the floor. Then, still gently, she takes the blanket and the sheet and crumples them in her arms and drops them on top of the bedspread.

She stands in the doorway. She sees the mess she has made and she sees the baby sleeping in his crib, and in the shadowy darkness of the corners of the room she sees Ralph with a screwdriver in his hand. He is talking with another man, gesturing wildly. The rumor is that he stabbed the man, and

she sees him thrust the screwdriver through the man's shoulder. Blood rushes out of the darkness at her and she jumps back and runs toward the kitchen, stopping herself quickly in the doorway. Ralph is there, sitting at the table. Darlene works around him, cleaning up the baby's dishes. She puts all the dishes into the sink and runs the water, adding detergent, keeping her back to Ralph.

"Where's Jack?" she asks in a minute, rinsing the last dish.

Ralph is staring at the design in the tablecloth. A cluster of red roses in a yellow circle. Fifty tiny clusters all over the cloth.

"He went home for dinner. He'll be back in an hour." He pauses for a second, then adds, "We're putting the stand back together tonight."

"I thought you'd be through with it now," Darlene says, although that wasn't what she thought at all. Somehow it seemed to be part of a script that had been memorized a long time ago.

"No. It's good, Darlene. Just this summer will set us up pretty."

"Like last summer. And the summer before that."

"God damn you, I made good money. You know I did."

He withdraws from her now. He had thought they would talk and everything would be all right, but there is a hostility between them that he hasn't the patience to smooth over. He knows that he could say the right words in the right way but he doesn't feel like fighting to find the words. It's easier to relax and say whatever is felt than to strain for words to convey false feelings.

She catches his mood immediately and she finishes the dishes calmly. The script is out the window and she likes being herself. Now she is afraid of him still, but she knows she doesn't care what he does because she has to think about herself and about the baby and what they will do.

"I brought home a thousand dollars each summer," he says, but he is talking for his own benefit, not hers. "I'll triple that this year. The stand's good, I know it is. I saw it last year in Virginia and the guy was doing a hell of a business. And Jack's going with me. The guys I had before screwed me good, I couldn't watch 'em close enough. But me and Jack, we'll rake it in."

The carnival life is in him. His mother and father raised him on the circuit. He is

a firm believer in the get-rich-quick scheme. He knows that he will clean up on a fortune someday. Darlene saw, in him, something that she liked, his impulsiveness, his vitality, but a lot of that had gone when she had made him get a job at the boat yard. In the summer it comes back to him and she loves him passionately for it, but now she is afraid of it and afraid of the love which accompanies it.

"When will you be leaving?" she asks.

"In the morning, if we get everything fixed."

Staring at the water as it swirls down the drain, she sees again the violence in him, wishes he were gone now, remembers his violence in bed at night, wonders why it took her four years to recognize that violence as a destructive force. She remembers the hints of uncontrollable temper, all the times his eyes flashed and he face darkened, all the times she had been afraid without knowing she was afraid.

"I'm going to my mother's," she tells him suddenly. The dirty dishwater has drained, leaving the sink bottom smudged with grey. "I won't stay here. I'm taking the baby with me."

"You're going to your mother's," he repeats the words. "What are you, crazy or something?"

She doesn't say anything and will not look at him, but even if she turned to look, he would not know. His head is buried in his arms on the table. He wonders why he broke up the stand. He could have drilled the holes again, ten minutes' work at the most. But he had been so close. This was his summer, his big one, he felt it, tasted it, and then those holes were wrong and it seems that everything is wrong. Trying to sort out the pieces of what is happening and what to do is a frustrating job, and he confuses easily.

"Ah, what the hell," he raises his head and stares at her back. "Go on. Get out of here."

His voice has that warning in it which, after what she has seen, she is quick to detect. She realizes that she has heard it before but, unconscious of its significance, had ignored it, and fear for what could have happened then spreads through her. Her legs are rubber as she gathers her things together, pajamas and underwear from the top bureau drawer, sweater from the closet, nylons that were hanging in the bathroom,

still a little damp. All these things go together into a large paper bag.

"I'll call you a cab." This is his only offer of help, as well as being his statement of finality. He has to go next door to use the phone. His phone was disconnected over a year ago and he still owes the company fifty dollars. He has had an extra fifty dollars plenty of times, but he has never thought to pay the phone bill with it.

When he comes back in, Darlene is sitting on the couch with the baby sleeping on her shoulder. She thinks that she might like to stay now, but knows that she cannot ask to stay and Ralph will not ask for her. She senses that she is failing him, but tells herself that he has failed her for four years, tells herself that failures have a way of working themselves out if people let them alone.

Ralph sits in the kitchen. He hears the honk of the cab, hears Darlene go out the door, hears the slam of the cab door, a dull thud that lingers distinctly in the air among clock ticks and the noise of passing cars. Now he is able to think clearly, and he realizes that he is wasting time. He goes out into the yard and surveys the damage done to his stand, not so much, not much at all, he tells himself. He and Jack working together can fix it in a couple hours, even in the dark.

He sees it finished. He sees the carnival in Atlanta, and himself as a part of that carnival. His mother and father were with that one, and now he will be. The stand is ingenious. Three balls for a quarter, hit the clown and win a teddy bear. This doesn't sound like much, but the clown is a real man, sitting on a platform fifty feet high, and when he is hit he falls into a pool of water. This is a great crowd pleaser; the people hate that clown; they want to kill him. The money rolls in. Winning a teddy bear is secondary to the real fun. Ralph knows. He has an instinct for the feelings of the crowd.

He starts to work. With a crowbar he tears off the damaged wood. Jack joins him without a word. They have been close for years but never this close. They put the new wood on, drill new holes for the bolts, put the bolts in. The high platform folds on hinges into a compact structure.

Ralph straightens the trailer axle the same way he bent it, with the sledgehammer. It is not perfectly straight but will do the job, and the work is finished. The stand sits securely on the trailer wheels, ready to roll.

Ralph's Mercury is parked by the curb. Ralph gets in, starts the motor, and starts to back the car into the yard so the trailer can be attached. The steering wheel turns but the wheels don't. Ralph twirls the steering wheel with his forefinger and it spins loosely around.

Looking under the car, he sees the tie rod hanging.

"The Goddamned tie rod's busted," he tells Jack. "Look at those wheels."

"I don't see how," Jack says. "It was all right this morning."

"It's snapped," Ralph decides. "It must have snapped just as we pulled in. And we didn't even hear it."

He knows that action is the only solution for the pressure that is once again inside him. Move, do something, don't think, just do something. Too late to get it fixed, not enough time even if they can find a place to do the work. So what about the truck down at Cy's garage, he keeps thinking. That truck would do the trick.

"Let's go," he says. "I'll get Cy's truck."

"Let me get under here a minute with a flashlight," Jack says. "I'd like to see how it busted."

"We don't have time. Come on. I hope Cy's in tonight."

Cy's Garage is only a couple blocks down the street. Cy lives in an apartment built in over the garage. His working hours are over and the garage is locked up, but there is a light on in the apartment. Ralph leans on the doorbell until Cy comes downstairs to open the door.

"I want that truck you got out back," Ralph tells him. "You wanted two hundred for it, right?"

Cy is in the middle of a good poker game and doesn't like being interrupted, but he has had that truck for two months now without getting an offer for it.

"Two fifty," he says.

He and Ralph debate about price for a few minutes, but Ralph is impatient and finally says, "All right, two fifty. Make me out a registration. I'll use the tags on my Mercury for it."

Cy makes out a temporary registration which isn't strictly legal, but it does prove ownership. Ralph gives him the two fifty.

"It's all yours," Cy says. "Shouldn't give you any trouble at all. The keys are in it."

And he goes back to his poker game. Ralph and Jack go around to the back of the garage and climb into the truck. The motor starts easily, sounds smooth, and now everything is all right again. They can load the stand into the truck, maybe a little more work, but at least they have transportation.

Ralph drops Jack off at his house, agreeing to be up and waiting for him at ten in the morning. Then he runs the truck around for a while, getting the feel of it, fully satisfied with its performance. It is almost midnight when he gets home and backs the truck into the driveway. The driveway is not quite wide enough, and the high hedges scrape and scratch one side of the truck, but Ralph is not worried about the damage to the paint.

In the bedroom, he sees the bed covers crumpled on the floor, remembers that Darlene has gone to her mother's. The house is quiet. The baby's crib is empty, but Ralph still tiptoes around the room from habit.

Undressed, lying in bed, he can't get comfortable. His legs ache dully no matter what position he puts them in. This is the first night since last summer that he hasn't slept with Darlene at night. He has never slept in this house without Darlene beside him except three nights last spring when she was in the hospital having the baby.

Dressed again, he pokes in the refrigerator, but doesn't see anything he would like to eat. Taking a flashlight, he goes outside. Now that he has the time, he would like to see how that tie rod managed to break, so he lies on his back on the street and slides under the car to take a look. What he finds is a loose bolt lying next to the tie rod. He lifts the tie rod, slips the bolt back into place, tightens it as much as possible with his fingers.

He gets out from under the car, turns the steering wheel, and the wheels turn. Grinning, he goes into the house, comes back out with the right size wrench, tightens the bolt fully, and the Mercury is fixed, ready to go. Now he and Jack won't have the extra trouble of loading the stand into the truck.

He can sleep now. In the morning he is up at eight, eats a good breakfast, eggs and burned bacon, and is outside in the yard by eight-thirty. The stand is a good sight to see, but then his gaze lights on the truck sitting in the driveway.

The cab of the truck is black with an orange stripe about two inches wide painted

around the hood. The van is dark blue with a silver top that gleams dully in the morning sunlight. The truck just sits there as a symbol of his hasty action. He glares at it and through his teeth says you dirty son-of-a-bitch softly, and, liking the release of tense muscles which accompanies the words, he says them again, a little louder. But he really can't get through that impassive grinning grill. He knows if he looks at it any longer that he will get angry in order to overcome the growing helpless feeling.

Like an idiot, he thinks, he had to be impulsive and buy that monster. Two hundred and fifty dollars. Now he isn't sure he has enough money to get to the carnival in Atlanta. When he gets there, he will have to pay the set-up fee.

He pulls out his wallet to check his money. Almost two hundred dollars. Fifty for the set-up will mean that one-fifty can go for traveling, food, and whatever might come up. Pulling the heavy trailer, the Mercury will use a lot of gas. He only got eight miles to the gallon last year with a Chevy, and the trailer had been lighter then.

But Darlene has gone out without any money. He will have to give her fifty to last until he can send more. So that leaves him a hundred dollars to take him eight hundred miles. He could catch a carnival in Virginia easily, but that would be the same as the last two summers. This summer is different. A new stand, and the same carnival that his mother and father were with, the carnival that saw him born. He feels strong again, successful, the money will be enough, everything is good again.

Nine o'clock. Another hour and Jack will arrive, another hour after that they will have the stand hitched up and ready to go. Two hours. He wishes Jack would hurry. He suddenly laughs, for a glimpse of his stand, surrounded by eager, laughing people, has just gone through his mind.

Thinking about the stand, thinking about being in Atlanta, Ralph decides to call Luke Bright, who is in Atlanta now and who would solidify the reality of the dream. Luke is a contact man who routes the Atlanta carnivals during the season, and Ralph knows him well from the old days.

Ralph knocks loudly on the front door of the Carson house, and Mr. Carson opens it. He is a big man who disapproves of all the noise that has been going on next door for the

past month, but he has not said anything about it. To Ralph he talks like a friendly neighbor, to his wife he rants and raves about those Goddamned people next door.

"Hi," Ralph says. "Hey, can I use your phone a second?"

By the time Mr. Carson gives permission, Ralph is through the door. The phone is in the hallway. Mr. Carson waits in the living room while Ralph dials the operator and gives her the Atlanta number.

Ralph listens as the phone rings, a dull buzz happening in Atlanta, eight hundred miles away. Eight times. nine times. Ten. Ralph listens, lulled by the tranquility of the sound, lulled by the sense of distance being covered.

"Yeah? Yeah? Who is it?"

"Ralph Sawatki, Luke. This is Ralph Sawatki. I'm coming down, Luke. How's things look? Think the old town's ready for the hottest stand ever built?"

Ralph likes the sound of that. The hottest stand ever built.

"Ralph? Christ, I'm glad you called. Forget it, you hear? Forget the whole damned deal."

"Forget it?" Ralph smiles.

"The whole show's been disbanded," Luke says. His voice sounds savage over the phone. "Christ, what a job. All the wheels busted up, license revoked, the works."

"But the carny was square," Ralph says. "I know that carny. It was strictly on the level."

"Sure. Level all the way, Ralph. But some local cop thought he got screwed. Things happen, you know. It's just tough. Look, I can guarantee you a spot down in Tallahassee next week. How does that sound?"

Ralph puts the receiver carefully back on the hook, and even as he walks out of the hallway, he can't remember whether or not he answered Luke's question. Did he say yes or no, he wonders.

"Wait just a Goddamned minute," Mr. Carson says, his voice vibrating through the hall. Ralph smiles thinly and waits.

"You called Atlanta. I heard you. Atlanta, Georgia. I thought you were calling up the street or something. That's about a five dollar call you made."

"Yeah, I called Luke Bright," Ralph nods slowly. "He says the carny busted up."

"That's about a five dollar call," Mr. Carson repeats.

Ralph stares at him for a brief moment,

then realizes what the trouble is.

"You want your money," he says.

"Five dollars," Mr. Carson says. "I can't afford to pay for your long distance calls."

"Sure," Ralph says, digging into his wallet. He finds a five and hands it to Mr. Carson. "Sometimes I don't think," he says.

The feeling is there now. A deep breath hurts. The house is too small and getting smaller. Ralph gets out quickly. The morning air is fresh, the sun is sharp. Ralph goes over to his own yard, and stands in the shadow of the truck, looking at his stand.

The stand throws a crazy shadow. The sun is hitting it at an odd angle and the shadow

looks nothing like the stand itself. Ralph studies the shadow, so distorted, so wrong. Goddamned crazy shadow, he thinks. He wonders what Darlene is doing. Have to leave her some money, he thinks. Fifty at least. Minus fifty for the set-up. Minus the five for the phone call. Less than a hundred dollars left for traveling.

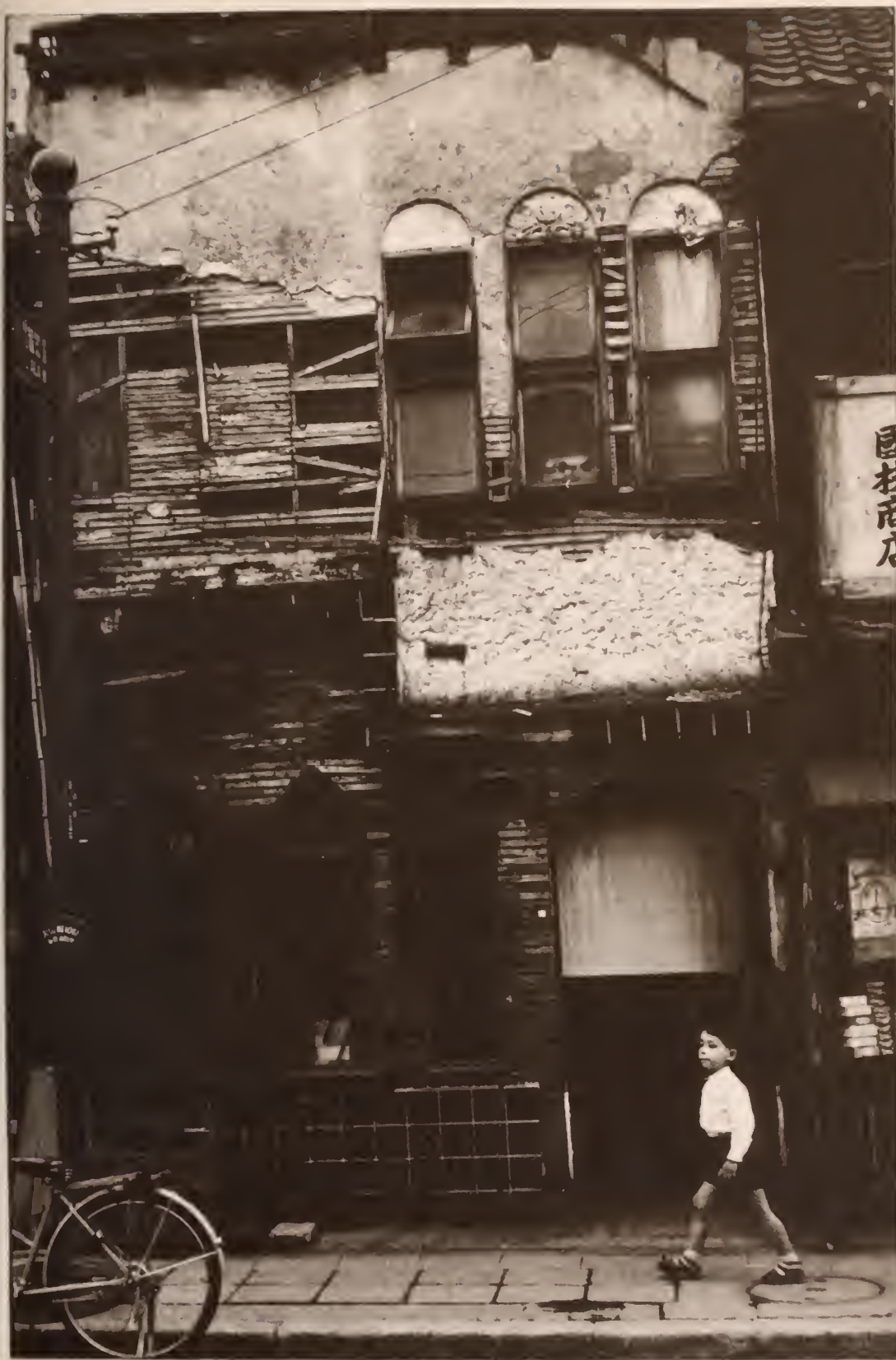
Did he tell Luke that he would come to Tallahassee, he wonders. Or should he just grab a carny in Virginia and tie up there. Would anything he did take the pressure off and let him breathe again.

He sits down beside the truck, his legs crossed beneath him. He wishes Jack would hurry so they can get started.

THE TREE

by Mary Slayton

The tree
Seemed a green sea
Swum into by children.
Rough,
Silent,
Consuming,
It flooded them all with the feeling
That it was a tree.
Half-drowned,
They fathomed its
Depth.
It grew dark.
A child
Left a half-boarded raft.
Small, twisted nails
Whitened;
Within all the green,
Silver was polished
By the last strength of the sun.
A shred of a shirt
Clung to a nail.
Bark ridged lingering hands.



VENO DISTRICT

Jim Forbes

The outside tent circus has been in decline all over the country in my generation and now we don't get the circus in this city any more. But in the spring there is a smaller circus held in an armory. War veterans sponsor it and offer to elementary school children special prices and a day off from school.

I learned these last things in a letter my mother sent me at school. She wrote me that my sister was excited about going to the circus, and then, a few days later, wrote that my father had to attend a friend's funeral, that she herself had the flu, and that my sister was now in a black mood. Or at least grey, since she was only a little girl. They all felt so sorry for her at home, because she had never been to the circus.

I really felt sorry as hell. I was always a great circus man myself. Once my grandfather and I saw both shows on a day when it was over one hundred degrees and at night over ninety. My mother tried to stop us the first time by stating my grandfather's age and my age and the temperature over and over again in a different way each time. Finally we got away. My grandfather mumbled about my mother's high school education which he had always mistrusted. The second time, before the night show, she gave up protesting and instead described a fight which had taken place in the neighborhood that afternoon and which showed tremendous promise of resuming again. "Damn the fight and may Christ preserve the circus," grandfather said, impressing me.

"You're making a terrible impression on him," my mother said. "Taking him to two circuses in the same day, and cursing, and being rude."

"Good-bye," grandfather said.

"Good-bye, Mommy," I said.

We would begin by seeing all the queer things first. The bearded lady stuff. My grandfather said that it was best to begin with something exciting. Like the man swallowing fire. To begin at the circus with a general tour or something to eat was too dull. Besides, the heat was not good for walking or food. Diabetes was the result of too much candy. He couldn't eat candy himself because he had diabetes. "I know you like to look at everything first," he said, "and the candy is good, but neither of those things is exciting."

So in this manner my grandfather always persuaded me to see the queer things first.

But of course the best was the show itself with the elephants running, not trotting, and lovely women flipping and twisting on their backs. There was wonderful booming, blasting music dominated by a drum. There were yellow lions with blond manes that bounced and shone like a woman's hair. I think my grandfather said that. The lion tamer was brave and would be as insulting as possible to the lions. As he finished, he yelled at them insultingly, turned his back, and strode out of the cage.

Many other things. Clowns more fascinating than comic, smells of food and candy cooked in grease, smells of people sweating, smells of canvas and sawdust. And each time we saw it all—twice that day, the year before, years afterward—it was as fresh and new as the very first time.

And so it was more than a whim that I wrote my mother I would drive home from school and take my sister to the circus. In the same sense it was more than a whim too that I asked Molly, who my mother had never met, to go with us.

Driving toward the city we both wondered whether my mother would like her. I thought she was thinking about that too much, although it may have been me myself who was thinking about that too much, and I said, "Does it matter so much?" It was kind of pretentious to worry about a thing like that, as if we were on our way to tell we were married.

"Of course," she said as if I were silly. "It would be better if she liked me. Anyway I hope I like her," she said and laughed. "Maybe I shouldn't have worn shorts," she said and laughed again. She thought she was smarter than I was, but that was about the only difference between us.

We were to drive to my house for lunch and then pick up my sister at her school.

During lunch my mother asked details of a girl's life at college. You would have thought my mother was going to go next year. On and on they talked until I thought we were going to be late for the goddamned circus. And said so. My mother said, "Oh for God's sake don't be profane about such little things as being behind time." The heat in the kitchen, as the sun poured in the big windows,

and the conversation which seemed endless because I was excluded from it, together gave me such a feeling of senseless unending repetition that I felt almost ill.

"Come on," I said and got up.

"Don't be profane at all," Molly said, grinning.

My mother said, "I heard all this college from a boy and now from a girl it's much more interesting."

I was at the door and had to turn to talk to them. "Come on, let's go, Molly."

Molly was laughing. "Good-bye, Mrs. Webster. I hope you're battling your flu."

"I'm fighting it, Molly. Just so it doesn't come back. Remember where to get your sister," she said to me.

"Yes, on the basketball court." I was pushing lightly on Molly's back as she went out the door ahead of me.

"That's right. Have a nice time."

"Good-bye," I said.

Finally we drove off.

Molly asked, "What's your sister's name?"

"Shelby. They named the kid Shelby."

"What's the matter with that?"

"It sounds like a bike or a movie star."

The car was moving fast now and I felt better.

"That's all right. I mean you like that, don't you?"

"It's all right. My grandfather and grandmother named her, not me."

"My name's unusual."

"Not many people are named Molly," I granted.

"It sounds Jewish."

"But you aren't Jewish."

"No, because my hair is blond and neither my mother, father, grandfather, or grandmother was Jewish." She giggled.

"You ought to be in the circus."

"The last time I was at the circus was as a little girl. And I'm not a little girl now," she added. She seemed pleased at herself.

"No, you're not." I felt so much better.

I stopped the car at the side of the basketball court and called to my sister. She was nine. When she came to the car she looked, looked, and then asked, "Front or back?"

"Front," Molly broke in. "Get in the front." She got out Shelby came around to the other side of the car, got in, and Molly got back in.

"Say hello," I said.

"Hello," Shelby said.

"I'm going too," Molly told her.

"This is Molly," I said and paused, during which Shelby said nothing. "And this is Shelby," I continued. Even though she will try very hard to discover it, I think that a girl does not know at first if another girl is engaged in the same things as she herself, and therefore a competitor, or just what the relationship is. So she assumes that the other is her rival. At least then this was so.

"Yes," Molly said. "I used to go to the circus when I was your age. I went lots of times during the week it played. They had two shows, one now and one at night."

"They only have one now," I said. "More people come in the afternoon than at night."

Shelby said, "Sure. It might spoil it if I went at night. I wouldn't miss school and I wouldn't see television that night."

"There was very little television when Molly was your age," I said wisely.

Molly put her arm on the top of the seat in back of Shelby and crossed her legs the way a man does, an ankle resting on a knee.

"I can remember," she said, "things all the way back to the war. In Philadelphia we had black curtains and I can remember the sirens going. When they sounded, all the lights went off."

"You lived during the war?" Shelby asked.

"Sure she did," I said. "And me too."

"Boy!" she said to Molly, "you must be as old as my brother."

"The same age."

I said to Shelby, slowly so that she would understand, "Mommy was married and I was born when she was Molly's age."

Shelby looked at Molly, fully in the face. I did not want to tell her I was going to marry Molly. Besides, there was no need to, because now Molly was to her someone like her mother or aunt, a generation removed.

At last we got to the circus. The building it was in was where I once saw Gene Autry, and it seemed too small for a circus. We got seats way up in the stand in the last row. Under us were lions in their cages. The tops of the cages were steel and we couldn't see the lions. But when there was a lull in the music, while the trapeze people were doing something dangerous, we could hear the lions moving in their cages. Occasionally they growled.

"Can they get out?" Shelby asked.

"I hope not."

"They would eat us," Molly said.

"Do they keep them there the whole show?"

"Until they do their act," I said. "That's near the end, though."

What happened before the lions came on was that a man was shot out of a cannon into a net, seals balanced various things, elephants and clowns and women went around the armory in a circle, and a girl performed on the high wire. Other things too. Shelby had never seen any of it and watched intently with excitement.

Only it all was a disappointment to Molly and me. For one thing the man never came out of the cannon until the third time it went off. The first two times there was an explosion and smoke and nothing happened. Then he came out and the explosion and smoke came afterward while he was in the air, so you could tell they were doing it with a spring or something. And the seals dropped too many things and the girl on the wire had big, thick legs and was over forty. It was obvious she had been doing this for years because her smile was terribly artificial and you had absolutely no apprehensions about her falling. When she was young probably she had transmitted the feeling of danger naturally, but now it was a fear she didn't have, and she had never learned to give the impression of being slightly insecure which would have made the people excited.

Worst of all, the elephants couldn't run, couldn't even trot, because each step they took removed the thin layer of sawdust, uncovering the wooden floor beneath, and they almost slipped many times.

At last the lions were let into their big cage and the lion tamer stepped in insolently with them. Shelby was leaning forward.

He wasn't a bad performer, even though he didn't do too many brave things. He was very small and frail with a long, thin moustache. You could tell how much he was afraid as he sweated and looked several times at the men with guns around the cage and always at the lions. But he got better near the end. Finally as a finish he began to seat the lions where they were when the act started, making

it fancy and complicated.

When he got to the last lion he must have decided to be very impressive because he seemed to snap the lion across the eyes with his whip. The lion gathered himself and the man went under him as he jumped. Everyone stood and made a noise. Molly held onto my shoulder. I tried to grab Shelby but she was standing on her seat jumping up on her toes. As the lion turned and gathered himself for another try the men around the cage shot him. The guns were big and did not at all sound like a string of firecrackers. They roared. Shelby's eyes were wide and Molly held my neck and arm. The lion tamer was out of the cage and the lions inside were trotting fast in circles and going against the bars again and again. He didn't look at them after he got out of the cage, but walked without ever turning around through a door under the stand directly below us.

When it was all over Shelby couldn't wait to get home and tell mother about it. Not only the shooting but the whole circus. She pushed through the people ahead of us down to the sawdust floor.

The people were pushing us close together and moving faster as we moved down the stand and Molly held onto me more around the neck than the shoulders. You could hardly hear because everyone was talking and they were playing music down on the floor.

"She'll get the sawdust in her shoes and clothes." I had to shout.

"Yes," Molly said loudly next to my ear. "You know, it must have taken a lot of trucks to bring all that sawdust in here."

"And they still didn't cover the floor completely."

"No," she shouted, "the elephants couldn't run."

Outside the armory, in the sun, her brow was perspiring. She wiped it on the short sleeve of her shirt as we hurried to catch up to Shelby. We were both anxious to get home and listen to Shelby tell mother her excited version of the circus.



MASQUERADE by Stephanie Davis.
Drypoint, 8 x 11.

(Editor's note: the author of this story is the daughter of a man who was personal advisor to Syngman Rhee and to the Korean government. When the Korean War began her

family was forced out of Seoul and out of the country. Later, when the war was over, they went back. This is an account of her return to the country of her childhood.)

RETURN

by Diana Lady

How can you describe the painful anticipation of opening a door to old memories? It was not so long ago that I opened such a door. My mind was adjusted to the fact that I was going back, and that things would be different. I had even been told what to expect; but "War" was as far removed from me as it was to most American children. True, I had had a brief but memorable encounter with it, but years had passed and like a Greek Tragedy, the image of it was for the most part a second-hand description. I knew that many of my playmates had been killed or dragged off to prison camps. I even knew that the city would contain only the loneliness of a bombed-out building filled with huddling refugees. But to my world of banana splits, rock-and-roll and first year algebra, it was incredibly unreal.

Ironically, it was just about this same time in early summer, but then it was so long ago. How could a dulled pain express the tragedy of war?

The transition had been gradual. I had already been out of the States for three months, and after a two-week's stay in Hong Kong, I was once again adjusted to the uniqueness of the Orient.

When I boarded the plane that was to take me back home, to Korea, I had steeled myself into believing that this was just another country that I was passing through. But the moment I was greeted by the Korean Airline stewardess, this image disintegrated. Just the vague familiarity of the Korean language being spoken by the passengers around me was enough in itself to bring back a maze of entangled memories. I felt childish in my excitement of just knowing that I was flying over Korean territory. As I looked from the plane window, I could see the neat lushness of the blue-green rice patties patterned below.

When finally the plane landed, the stark militarism of the unfamiliar airport dismayed me. However, the gay welcome from my family and my dimly remembered Korean friends left me little time for this feeling.

As I walked across the shattered concrete of the airstrip, I noticed the sun edging behind a mountain. The mountains! I had forgotten about these mountains, they were so much a part of my memory of Korea. I used to think that Korean mountains were like no others. They are like a child's image of what a mountain should look like. No gently rolling hills; in Korea, the land is flat and then suddenly a mountain pyramids into the sky. Seoul is in a flat valley surrounded by four main mountains, each one with a distinct personality.

As I got into the car that was to take me the ten miles into Seoul, I kept looking to the mountains for the reassurance that I was really home. There was the pleasant prattle of: "How was your trip?" "Did you lose your passport?" and "We missed y..." But wait! this was too normal, I was going to a much-publicized war-torn country. My last memory of Korea had been the all-night vigil of planes flying overhead. A distant drone, interrupted by flashes of light. The unpleasant game of outfitting the bomb shelter . . . All night packing, and "Please can't I take my teddy bear?" and "Why must we leave everything nice behind?" Strange, getting into the car in the dead of night. Not having seen television, I could not appreciate the melodrama of my brother and me huddled against Mother in the back seat. The "number 1" houseboy driving jerkily. My father in the front seat beside him, revolver cocked. "Sorry sir, no Americans beyond this roadblock, I know the airport is north but the next road block may be in the hands of the . . ." "Daddy, are the Commies. . ." "Quiet!" Is the motor stalling? . . . "Halt!" A gun in my face. . . "Good God, Americans out here at the airport? . . . Sorry sir, the airport was just strafed and your plane, all the planes. . . there will be another plane before dawn."

Wait. Wait. Wait. Airborne...finally, Japan.

Stop it! That's all passed, the world's

right-side up again, War has passed over and nothing is changed. I'm in a car riding back to Seoul.

My parents had arrived a few weeks before, so they were full of news. I listened to the conversation. . . The countryside looked raw, like the red hands of refugee children that even spring cannot soften. The road was bumpy, but that was never unusual in Korea. There were unscarred expanses of rice paties, but they were interrupted by shattered treeless hills. The thatch-roofed houses seemed impermanent.

We crossed the Han River. The bridge was a make-shift structure that ran parallel to the tombstone remainders of the old bridge. As we went through the suburbs of Seoul, I noticed that although many buildings were untouched, the burnt shells of others were evident. Most of the trees along the main avenues were gone. I felt as though the city were unoccupied. As we penetrated deeper into the city I saw more and more bombed buildings. As I expected, I saw many refugees, but there had been refugees before the war, for thousands of Koreans had slipped into South Korea, leaving wealth and family to escape the Communist oppression. I began recognizing familiar landmarks. My parents had warned me, thus insulating the shock of the lifeless remains of some of the more familiar buildings.

But was this war? Trees were gone, buildings were gone, burned or unoccupied, people were homeless, but they smiled and seemed settled, even as they sat on the formless piles of brick that were their only identity. I saw a family eating their evening meal. Ironically, they appeared almost like a family on a picnic, enjoying the warmth of the late afternoon sun.

I wanted to see our old house, so my parents agreed to drive by it. The house had been a large brick monstrosity in a spacious compound with several other houses. The compound had been beautiful, with gardens, a

conservatory, a teahouse on the hill, a brook with a little blue bridge, tennis courts and a swimming pool. The swimming pool now looked like an abandoned rock quarry, the tennis courts were unrecognizable. All the other houses in the compound were in various states of ruin. But there was our house, intact, with only a broken window to show for it all. I was told that our house had been used as a Communist headquarters during the war and it was now being used by the U.S. Army as a recreation club. I was not allowed to go in since in typical Army fashion, they had colorfully decorated the walls with murals of nude women.

This had been my home and world for several years, but I don't think that seeing it disturbed me quite as much as did the next landmark, South Gate. With its massive stone front and gracefully arched roof, South Gate had been a beautiful symbol of the greatness of Korea during ancient times. It had survived many wars and been restored many times, but seeing it for the first time in a scarred ruin, I felt that it symbolized the broken pride of the Korean people.

At last we came to the main avenue of Seoul, at the end of which is the Capitol building. I was surprised; from a distance it appeared to be the one building that had been untouched by the war. But as we drove nearer I realized that it was an abandoned, crumbling facade. Elsewhere in the center of Seoul, buildings were bombed or in an embryonic state of repair.

My ride had deeply saddened me. I was forced to face the ruined remains of my own childhood memories and those of a country ravaged by war. I felt the despair and sadness that war leaves. As I stepped from the car, reflecting on the hopelessness of the situation for the Korean people, a little Korean boy, who couldn't have been more than six, touched me gently on the arm, smiled and said: "You like me to shine shoe for you, nice lady?"

....smiled and shook hands with his friend Murphy and walked toward the library. In the library lobby he called his wife. "Hello, Grace, it's me, Alan. Fine, that's what I'm calling about—well, no, I just ate a sandwich in the Student Union. Well gee...can't you freeze it? Don't cry Grace, please. Well, I'm in the library. I'd like to stay here and work on my thesis. I've got to start off the semester right, Grace. Soon the baby will be coming, and I'll have all those compositions to correct, and I won't have any time at all for—...yes, I'll be home about 10:30. It closes at ten. Okay, g'by." He hung up sadly, confused. "I've got to start off the semester right," he said to himself, as he walked up the stairs to the browsing room. His words echoed in his mind, with the same pleading, defeated sound that he had used to his wife. "Twenty-four hundred dollars to live on for the year," he thought, as he fought off a yawn. He opened the door to the browsing room and walked in. Almost every seat was taken, so he sat down on a sofa in the back, next to a boy who was reading a freshman English text. He had planned to read the assignment that the first composition would be written on, but changed his mind when he realized that it was the same book the boy next to him was reading. He was somehow ashamed to be reading, at his age, the same book that this obviously younger boy was reading. "What a silly feeling for a man," he thought, but he just couldn't take the book from the briefcase. He put his briefcase next to him on the floor, and squirmed, while seated, out of his suitcoat that he placed between himself and the boy on the sofa. The boy moved slightly, away from the coat, without looking up from his book.

The crowded room was very warm. Alan loosened his collar, slipped his tie from his neck and into his coat pocket. He fought off another yawn. Directly in front of him a girl sat with her legs crossed, and he found it difficult forcing himself to stop looking at the legs and slip. She moved her top leg gently up and down silently, hypnotizing Alan, as if a coin were being pendulated before his eyes. The door opened, startling Alan, and he pulled the first book that his hand touched from his briefcase, and began to read. "...a pagan suckled by a creed"—oh no, it was the fresh-

man text. He closed the book slowly, and saw the blue cover glaring symmetrically with the boy's next to him. He forced it back into the briefcase and while suppressing another yawn, drew a cigarette from his pack, and lit it. The closest ashtray was in the aisle next to the vacant seat behind him, and he reached back and slid it toward him. He tossed his used match into the sand and butts, and began reading the unfinished introduction he had written for his thesis. Grammatical and syntactical blunders were in almost every sentence of the two month old paper, and he read with astonishment, almost to tears, for a half hour. He was now on his third cigarette.

On his left sat a girl in almost the same sexy position as the girl in front of him. She was very hairy, and her legs were flabby, not alluring Alan at all, but in fact disgusting him. He hadn't even noticed her at all, until she suddenly reached across the aisle and slid the ashtray that he was using toward her. Alan looked up from his paper at her. She, in turn, looked arrogantly up from her book at him. The silence grew louder in his ears. He had a long ash on his cigarette. The cylindrical ashtray stood like a large pawn on the square-tiled floor. The yellow lights became hotter. It was his move. He reached out and slid the ashtray three squares back toward himself, allowing it to be a slight bit closer to himself than it was to her. He flicked his ash and settled back into his seat. A few seconds later, she reached across and brought the ashtray back to where she had originally put it. Alan's pulse pounded wildly in his ears. His face burned with anger. Again, he stretched, grabbed the ashtray, this time with irritated force, and pulled it all the way back to his side where it had originally been. He sneered silently, warningly, at her. She reached across, placed her hand on the ashtray, and before she moved it an inch, Alan threw his hand on the opposite side of it, defying her movement. The girl pulled harder and Alan averted harder. For a few long, timeless minutes they battled silently, both staring at the ashtray, unaware of the eyes that were watching them with amazement. Finally, the girl released her grip and the ashtray slid slightly toward Alan under his force. Then she stood up, her face trembling from hysteria, grabbed the

ashtray from Alan and emptied it up-side-down on his head. Sand, ashes, and butts slid down his shirt and covered his head. Then Alan, enraged beyond belief, revealing a degree of anger that he'd never displayed before, jumped at the girl. Like a wild animal, he knocked the ashtray from her hands. It crashed to the floor. All eyes were on him. The ashtray bounced against the leg of a chair. He began punching her, in

the stomach, in the face, pulling her hair, kicking her in the groin, until she collapsed unconscious against a wall. She slid down to the floor, Alan still kicking her. Two men grabbed Alan by the arms and forced him out of the room. And thru the silent library, and then out across the darkened campus going toward the infirmary, could be heard the hysterical screams of Alan, trying to explain what had happened.

"I"

by Arlene Roemer

I the individual
Revere the palette of a soul
 revealed
 through voids of silent introspection:
What matter that I choose
 To go about the world in tattered tennis shoes?

I see below the maddened, splashed veneer
 Of a Van Gogh,
And yet the depth of my despair
 is not to be reflected by my unkempt hair.
And on my table those few violets
 are fading and in harmony my being humbles
 for it must be these that fade before the blasphemy
 of my blue-faded dungarees.

The evening floods my skylight
 like a scolding shadow
 sent to quickly end my labors of the day—
And I descend to contemplate
 through winding streets and alleyways
 the regimented scheme of one and then another
 lowered, gaudy light
 and dark-felt chimneys
 worn with life and blackened ash, yet proud
 with overwhelming height.

"Have another one, Marie," prompted the crew-cut man on her left, as he poured a "shot" from his flask into a paper cup.

"All righty," she agreed with a giggle.

"How about you, Bob-O? Another one?"

"Sure thing," answered Marie's husband, taking his eyes from the homecoming parade which was strung around the field like a strip of gaudy crepe paper.

"How about me, Ray? You didn't even ask me."

He turned to his wife, Rita, and she leaned toward him awkwardly. Her hair was mussed-up in the front and her eyes were filmy. She had already had three.

"Aw, baby."

He bent down and kissed her forehead. Then he poured her a drink too. Ray set the flask between his feet and looked about at the crowd.

"Hey, there's Benny Reid," he exclaimed, pointing to a lumpy fellow in a camel hair coat who elbowed his way down the stadium stairs.

"Benny! Hey, Benny, over here!"

He jumped to his feet, spilling most of his drink on Rita's suit.

"Hey Benny, you kid, right over here baby."

The chubby man stared about blankly for a second before he saw who was calling.

"What say, Raymond? How you been?"

"Fine, real fine."

"Are you still working at Goddard?"

"Yeah, I'm still there."

There was a pause, before Raymond patted his own ample paunch and said, "My! How you've grown since I saw you last year."

The man grinned, looking like a teddy bear in his bulky coat.

"It's a passion cushion."

They both laughed and people in the crowd craned their necks to see who was making the racket.

"Listen, Lynda and I are way down front. We'll see you at half time, okay"

"Yea, sure thing."

The lumpy fellow waddled down the aisle.

Ray sat down. He had a smile on his face, but he felt flushed and embarrassed.

"That was Benny Reid," he said to Rita.

"He's a buddy of mine from way back. He was a 'Deke.'"

Rita nodded dully.

What an ass, thought Ray. I wonder if he's still selling insurance.

He shook himself free of the thought.

"Are you cold, honey" asked Rita. "You're shivering."

"No, I'm okay."

He picked up the flask and leaned across Marie's lap.

"Bob-O! Let me give you a refill."

Ray filled Bob's cup and then straightened. He left his hand on Marie's thigh as he turned to his wife.

"How about it, baby?"

She held out her cup. Ray was squeezing Marie's thigh as he awkwardly poured Rita a drink with his left hand.

Hey, nice, he said to himself as he felt the bulge of flesh where her girdle ended.

Bob was watching the parade of floats. Marie was staring obliviously into the crowd. Ray took his hand from her leg, capped the flask, and jammed it into his overcoat. He sucked in a deep breath and held it. He felt like he had to burp, but he couldn't.

The stadium was filling fast. The mum on each girl's lapel formed a garish mosaic on the home side of the field. The mosaic swayed and parted like sunlight on an ocean of tweed, leather, and corduroy. Deep, hoarse chants crashed about Ray and echoed flatly off the scoreboard. The band played loud and brassy. The leggy cheerleaders bounced and pin-wheeled along the sidelines, spinning their skirts out to show off the red panties. Every moment someone sounded a horn or rang a cowbell.

It's probably that same bastard from five years ago, thought Ray hazily. He probably didn't even go to college. He just comes to ring his bell.....Everything the same. The same girls for homecoming queen, all blondes with tight corsets.....Makes them look right in high heels.....Feels like hell to touch one.....like Marie's.....that wasn't bad, though.

He reached his hand over to her thigh again.

Better. Yeah, that's nice.....She's an iceberg though....hasn't even batted an eye.....Boy, Rita must be blind....blind drunk...like always. Everything the same... Same damn people everywhere you look.

Ray sat up straighter. It really was not that bad. It was kind of nice. It made you feel as though the past five years had been nothing.

The teams galloped out onto the field. The

same uniforms, the same numbers, the same players. The crowd pitched forward. Ray came to his feet, clapping and yelling. Bob and Marie were up, too.

Oh, you Marie. What a body.

Rita struggled for a moment, then flopped back down on the hard, wooden bench. Soon the crowd settled like a receding wave.

Rita tapped Marie on the shoulder.

"I have to go to the ladies' room. Come with me."

For a second Marie did not understand, but then she shook her head yes. They got up and struggled unsteadily toward the aisle.

Not again, thought Ray. Half her life she spends in the bathroom....all her goddam insides just one set of tile pipes....in and out, and in and out...Her ass is getting fat, he decided as he turned to the field.

He took a drink, stood for the kickoff, and yelled and swore for the next ten minutes. He missed the touchdown and the subsequent kickoff, searching for the cap to the flask which had bounced into the aisle.

At the end of the first quarter, Marie returned. She looked fresh, but still walked shakily.

"Where's Rita?" Ray asked, as she carefully sat down.

"She was sick a little bit in the ladies' room."

"Huh?" he returned blankly.

"She threw up a little. That's all. She'll be right here."

Marie covered her mouth with her hand and giggled for no reason.

Just like her....a few drinks and she starts barfing.

"Good. Ready for another drink? Come on now. I have to ply you with liquor, steal you from Bob-O, and drag you off to the Casbah."

Bob didn't hear. He was watching the game.

Ray gave her a refill and again let his hand linger on her thigh. She leaned to him, wrinkled her nose, and whispered, "Thanks, you're nice."

Bob was scratching his head and brushing dandruff from the shoulders of his jacket. Ray took Marie's hand, kissed it, and put it into his pocket.

This I could go for.....She's quite the kid....wonder what's with Bob....must wear his glasses to bed.

Near half time Rita came back. Her face was blanched and splotchy beneath a thick layer of powder and there were stains on the front of her suit. Ray kept Marie's hand in his pocket.

"Gimme a drink honey. I got a terrible taste in my mouth," said Rita.

Ray handed her the flask and she took a long gulp. She gave it back and leaned drowsily on his shoulder.

I hope she doesn't decide to puke again, thought Ray.

At half time the same band which had been playing at the same game on the same day for the past five years started the same tune. Everyone stood and solemnly slurred the words. The same people went milling up and down the same aisle.

Ray was aware that he was laughing a great deal. Marie was giggling. Rita smiled blankly. Bob watched the half time show.

The teams burst back onto the field. The crowd tilted closer. The cheerleaders cartwheeled dizzily. Ray passed the flask all around. They didn't bother with cups now. Rita started laughing too. Everyone laughed and cheered. The same for five years. Ray had his arms around Rita and Marie. The three of them swayed back and forth, drinking and laughing.

Then suddenly it was quiet. The crowd mumbled and hummed and pushed up the aisle. Ray dropped the flask and its contents spilled over the concrete. He did not stop.

Bob was far ahead. Ray had his hand on each woman's rump, pushing them ahead of him up the steps.

"I've got my hands full back here, Bob-O," he yelled, and reeled with laughter.

At the gate, Bob took Marie and they swayed off toward their car. Ray tried to wink at Marie as they left, but could not make his eye close.

Rita and he clung together precariously, singing, weaving toward the parking lot. Ray fumbled for the key and opened the car. They flopped in. Rita was still singing.

"Team, we're all behind you. Team, we're all behind you."

Ray slumped against her and took her jaw in his hand and shook it from side to side.

"You're drunk," he giggled. "Be quiet. You're drunk and I have to sober you up."

"Uh, uh," she persisted. "Team, we're all behind you."

Ray began slapping her playfully, saying, "You're drunk. I've got to sober you up."

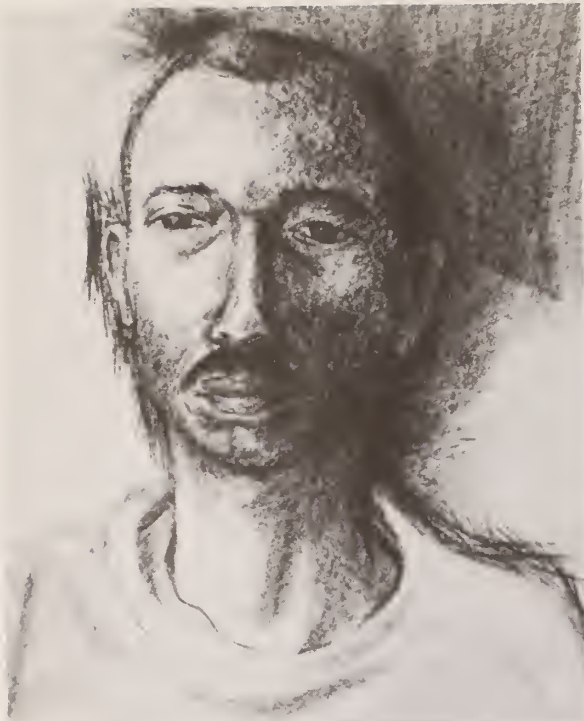
Rita laughed and continued singing. Ray tapped her lightly again on her cheek. Then he slapped harder. He closed his fist and hit her again and again until her lips bled.

"Shut up now," he yelled. "I hate your drunken fat ass."

THE BUTCHERS
Oil, 40 x 56
by Jim Giampolie







Left: ALLEN by Susan Coerr.
Charcoal drawing, 17 x 23.

Below: WINTER by Cynthia
Bickley. Entaglio, 16 x 20.





CHIMERA by Thomas Green
Drypoint, 12"



Left: LA BELLE DEMOISELLE
by Charlotte Pinkus. Oil, 24 x 30

Below: STORM HAVEN by Jack
Dillinger. Lithograph, 12 x 14.



New snow had laundered the highway that night, starching its frayed asphalt edges with an icy iron. By midnight the whole valley lay under a blue glaze. Trucks stamped their feet along U.S. 40, and finally stumbled off onto the shoulders of the road. They huddled together, wrapping themselves in warm, yellow light. Old men lay like grimy rag dolls on the cracked leather seats; the wind drummed through the frozen cow-smell of the trucks and rattled their bones. A mile down the highway the sign in front of Jimmy's Truck Stop blinked on and off, on and off. Neon green ricocheted off the white gravel driveway outside the cafe, and stung the brittle trees with a glaring whiplash.

Kaleb Todd snorted like an old horse, the bitter crystals of tobaccoed saliva pinching his chin. He dragged the last of the wood through Jimmy's battered doorway and dropped it on the kitchen floor.

"'Ar you go, damn her all. And ya best know—that's the last of 'er, too. It'll be a cold one tonight, it will!"

"O.K., O.K. Kaleb. Just shut up, will you, and get started on them pizzas." Jimmy stared past Kaleb with eyes like dull marbles embedded in his greasy forehead.

"Wop bastard," Kaleb whispered to himself, opening the door of the slate oven. He laid the orange slabs against the crate and limped toward the freezer. The veins were still twisted like blue cords in his stringy neck as he sprinkled cheese across the pizzas.

"Wop bastard!"

Out front, his daughter Penny poured coffee behind a stain-draped counter. The truckers, driven into Jimmy's by the storm, stood around the cinnamon scented room and sipped their coffee from cracked mugs.

"Yep, say she's down to 12 below at Carversville."

"Heard Macpherson lost his rig up to Roanoke."

The door blew open occasionally, as some canvas-coated driver slugged at the wind in an effort to escape the storm. Penny paused, the silk tassel of hair swinging behind her, and glanced toward the highway. Still no sign of Gilliam, at one A.M. The storm might ruin everything.

Nibbling at a pink thumb, she almost bumped

into Kaleb.

"'Ere they are, my girl. Pizzas."

Penny floated a porcelain smile at him.

"Thanks, Daddy." Then, smiling deeper into his eyes: "Thanks a lot."

Kaleb looked at her, startled. He beamed: "Sure, sure Lassie. She's all right!" He hobbled past his daughter and into the drafty kitchen.

Jimmy poked a stubby finger at him.

"Wha's up?"

"Nothin'. Goin' upstairs ter see about the pots. Be down in a while."

Jimmy glared after him, his round face disheveled by shadows. Then he plodded toward the lunchroom.

They met in the hall. Penny shivered against him like a frightened bird, pecking softly at his strength.

"Oh Jimmy. I'm so scared! Where is he?"

"Dont'cha worry, honey. He'll make it just fine."

Jimmy smoothed the rigid little face with flour-streaked fingers.

"But it's one o'clock, and he ain't here yet!" Penny whispered.

"Now you know Gilliam, sweetie. He's been drivin' 40 for thirteen years. He ain't goin' to miss tonight."

They stood together, swaying in the cold shadows behind the stove, lost in their hunger. Upstairs Kaleb knuckled the pots and pans; they could hear the old gas-light tunes croaking along the hall. At last she turned and hurried out to the counter.

The storm was growing worse by the hour. Penny served coffee and doughnuts with a quivering smile.

"Yup. Say she's going to be the worst ever. Cows already dyin' up and down the valley. Could mean National Guard, come morning."

The truckers stomped in and out. Wrapped up like dirty eskimos, they left blue puddles of melting snow on the grainy linoleum. There was little talking. The radio scratched itself with icy static, then stopped. They listened to the wind: delirious, it vomited snow all down the chimney.

The sweat glistened on Kaleb's grey face. He limped back and forth in the steam room like a broken puppet. Cursing, he sloshed the steel surfaces of the pans with a crawling rag.

"Aw, Christ Amighty! Them sonsabitches ain't never goin' to be clean nohow!"

He sagged back against a crate of lettuce. The light bulb swung nudely through the blue pipe-smoke above his head. He dreamed the old dream. It was always the same. They were watching the ships at Kitty Hawk, Sophie standing beside him. The ocean spray caught at her hair with cool, glittering fingers; it blew a sweet breath of silk in his face. Penny ran along the surf, her happy cries pricking at his ears like tiny jewels. It was good to be driving then, have a little dough in your pocket. They could get away once in a while, lay on the beach the whole, hot afternoon, smelling the tarry, caramel-coated sand.

"Ain't it somethin' though?" Sophie would look at him with her half-empty smile.

"The best thar' is. The best!" Kaleb answered his wife.

He remembered standing with the child, staring at her cheap tombstone. He had stumbled along the bordered paths of the cemetery, afraid, unable to leave, with Penny whimpering along behind him....

"You at it again?" It was Jimmy. He leaned heavily against the doorway. "It's O.K. Ain't much doin' nohow. Say, fella downstairs wants to see you. Names Gilliam. Says he used to ride with ya."

Kaleb blinked up at him. "Sure, I know 'im." He shuffled past Velentino. "Rode with 'im 12 years ago. Used ter make the Cincinnati run with 'im."

Gilliam was waiting at the bottom of the stairs. He twisted a cloth cap between knarled thumbs and looked at his shoes.

"Hi Kaleb. Say, could'ya come out to the truck for a minute?"

"Sure, sure Gilliam! 'Ow ya been doin', anyhow?" The watery old eyes sparkled at Gilliam. "Ye, sure. Let's get on out. Be outside, Jimmy!" He barked across the kitchen at Velentino, then scurried after Gilliam.

"O.K. O.K." Jimmy grumbled, clattering pans. He waited for a moment, then stepped toward the lunchroom.

"Penny, hey Penny! Get back here. Quick!"

Penny darted into the kitchen, one hand covering her red mouth.

"What? Where is he?"

Jimmy put his arm around her.

"We gotta' get movin'. Get the stuff. He's outside, talking to Kaleb. I think he's going to tell him."

Penny gasped. "But.. what... How can I tell him? He's my father, Jimmy. I been with him 23 years!"

"We can't do no more Penny. The stuff's all packed. We done all we could. Got him another job up the road. I'm leavin' him the truck. Hell, you want to stay here forever?"

"No!.. But ain't there no other way? Jimmy, he's 57 years old. He ain't never had nothin' but me."

Jimmy's hand shook on her shoulder.

"No other way, Penny. Dont'cha think I feel bad? Hell, I been watchin' him all night. Slams them pots around, curses behind my back. Always lookin' for a fight. Kaleb's lonely for somethin', Penny. Always has been, since I've known him. But I tell you, we ain't got a choice. Seems that's the way life is. A man gets old, gets left to himself. You gotta expect it. We can't get old in this trap. That ain't fair either."

Penny clutched at his arm, one hand lost in the big, calloused palm. She dragged the imitation-leather suitcase along the bumpy cement behind them. Together they moved toward the back door.

Outside, the wind sawed at the trucks with frozen teeth, blasting snow-dust against the windshield. Kaleb sat high up in the musty cab with Gilliam.

"Kaleb. I ain't sure I should say this. But I figgered, ..hell, we rode together, and I had a daughter too. Penny and Jimmy—they're takin' off tonight. I'm takin' 'em to Jacksonville. They asked me not to say nothin', but I can't do it without tellin' you."

"Jacksonville? Yer mean Florida?"

Kaleb watched the storm. Big and thick, the flakes whistled past the windshield.

"Takin' off on me, eh? Taking' right off on me!"

Kaleb nodded, the old head bobbing up and down like a withered apple on a string.

"Well, it's their right, aint' it?" he asked fiercely, glaring up at Gilliam. "'Ere old enough, both of 'em!"

Gilliam patted his knobby shoulder.

"Sorry Kaleb. Thought you'd want to know. Remember when my daughter went. Wished I'd known."

"Yeh, sure. She's all right. Thanks, thanks Gilliam. Listen, I'll see yer next run. Stop on by."

The truck door cracked like an ice cake on hinges. Kaleb stepped numbly into the snow. The storm thrashed at him with a net of frozen

slivers. He slushed knee-deep through the drifts toward the kitchen door.

They stood beside the pizza oven, watching Kaleb as he came through the doorway. He looked dully at his daughter.

"All right, I heard 'er already. Gilliam, he told me," Kaleb said.

Penny stepped toward him.

"Daddy, we're leavin'."

"I told ya'. I know already. Gilliam done told me!" His voice scratched at her like coarse gravel.

"I'm sorry Daddy, but we ain't got no choice." Penny trembled, her white face quivering.

"But, where.. what.." Kaleb croaked.

"Me and Jimmy, we're goin' south. We can't take it no more. They got opportunities down there, for young people. We can't stand it here, always snowin', and them greasy drivers out front. We got to, Daddy."

Jimmy coughed, looking past Kaleb at the red light on the parking lot.

"Kaleb, you got a job, don't worry. They're going to take you on over at Rodney's, up in Cartersville. The truck's yours. She wouldn't make it that far, anyway. Hate to do it, but we got a right." Jimmy scuffed at the greasy cement. "Look, we'll see you a little later, huh?"

They moved past him. Penny paused, one hand reaching out to the grizzled, whiskery cheek.

"I'm sorry, Daddy. I'll write every day, honest I will. This spring you can come on down to see us. We'll be all right, Daddy, I promise."

Jimmy nudged her toward the door. The wind hissed thinly through the rusty screens.

Kaleb watched them climb into the cab, bent over, flinching against the storm. Lights

flickered as the worn tires began to tear at the slush. The truck moved out to the highway, a hollow, rattling box on wheels, heading south. Gilliam nursed the shuddering gear box. Kaleb felt the big gears catching in his chest as the truck clawed at the pavement. In a moment they were gone. Empty, the highway stretched out of sight, cracking like a pale streamer in the wind.

Kaleb limped to the stove. Muttering thickly, he opened the iron grate. The money was still there, 78 dollars and 50 cents. He hobbled down the hall, clattering a frayed broom behind him. Kaleb pushed through the squeaky swinging door and into the lunchroom. He sat on a stool and began to count the wilted bills. The storm tore at the diner. The door had been locked an hour ago, and only a few drivers remained.

"Countin' the receipts, huh?"

Kaleb looked up emptily.

"You own this place?" The driver grinned at him. Kaleb noticed that most of his teeth were missing.

"Naw, just work 'er."

"Looks like ya took in a lotta dough to-night."

"No it's mine. Been savin' a while."

"Savin' huh! Whatcha gonna buy?"

"I ain't sure." Kaleb looked through the window.

"Pass them doughnuts, Fred." The driver turned back to Kaleb.

"Man don't save money for nothin'. Whad' you plan to do with it?"

"Don't know. Used ter figger I might go south someday."

"Real nice, down south." The driver slurped his coffee.

Outside, trucks rumbled along the highway.



KETHLEN by Jon Eaton.
Entaglio, 10 x 18.



COLLAGE by Eve Shpritz.
Collage, 8 x 15.

"Woe unto him that saith to the wood 'awake'
To the dumb stone 'arise.' "
Habakkuk 3.2:19

I was fifteen when I first took
pleasure in my bra.
I had God and man and love
and me
all waiting somewhere far.
I was beautiful—and danced the best.
And being smart, I learned to lead
And all would have to check with me
before they moved.
I like to think they thought of me
as ice—
Cold, aloof,
Yet I could burn if touched too hard
Or held too long.
(The best boy was never good enough)
I watched the games of all my pawns
And took delight in playing God
Because, you see, I understood
the common mind.

But then one day I saw the waste
In secret plots and reaccounts
of old affairs
Crying for boys one soon forgot

(Though cry I'd not!)
And endless useless noise.
I had never known what they called love
Nor laughed at jokes that punned their slang;
I felt like one great grinning bird
Repeating words I did not know.

It had been fun to stand apart,
But take the lead and thus be in—
But being out had cut me off
Because I thought—because I thought.

I told them all that they were fools,
That souls have eyes and art has wings;
I helped poor Jim to write a rhyme,
Passed out my books and spoke of God.
They listened knowing I was wise—
And didn't hear a thing I said.
So, then to entertain myself,
I turned my wit into a spear;
I thought with Swift that wit reforms,
But gained a laugh—and lost a friend.
And so I turned my musings in.

At seventeen I closed my door.
It was then I began this diary.
I wrote:

"To justify the ways of god to me."

June tenth
Haunting silence of the falling mist calls
I answer, "here."

June twelfth
Hicaldy, picaldy, nicaldy pie
Society just spit in my eye
And look, and look, and look right here,
Doesn't it look just like a tear

July eighth
My heart is yearning for something
As vast as the sea or the skies
and each time it rises above me
Something inside of me dies.
Oh no one can hold me I see—
For my heart breaks out and explodes me
Into millions of fragments of me.
I must know:
What and Why

The summer dragged on long and hot
And all my being was turning in;
I read what man had said of life
and felt what man had felt of death.
But dreams—
they crumble;
Thoughts solidify.
And then one day
I know not why—

August thirty
I felt alone
I felt I'd died
Too much sun—
The sun's too bright.

September first
I watch the rain.
Deepening silence of the spreading mist calls.
I answer "here."

I went away to school
In new alones I reached for Paul
His face was like that of a god
That had been damned and then arose
but to find his heaven gone.
He now dreamed dreams that denied his dreams
For to dream would make him feel
And to feel would give him pain
And lack of pain was all he craved.
And yet—and yet—he loved—loved me
And hated me because he loved.

October tenth

When we love we give away
The part of us that makes us think
The part of us that makes us feel
And nothing's left to help us live;
We die but we don't die inside
We die and live apart from us.
We do not know that we are dead
And yet we know we ceased to live.
We cannot live when "I" is dead
and only "We" is left for "I."
Life hangs upon the unsaid word,
I am eighteen, I am in love.

October twenty-third

Paul and I saw Jim today
Jim took my hand and made me laugh.
When Jim had gone
Paul called me a slut.

January eighth

We had another fight today.
I wanted him to stay with me
I shouted "go away"
I think he grabbed my arm.
"Let go, let go,
you're hurting me.
Stop it—stop it—please..."
He slapped me—
no,
no.
Oh Christ, I didn't mean...
The rage...
My nails—blood on my hands.
He was bleeding by the eye
He said,
"Don't cry."
I couldn't stop myself.
Why doesn't he just die
Or kill himself
He always says he will.
I hate him.
That's not true
I love him.
No, I don't.

February twenty-fourth

Secret silence of the falling mist calls.
I answer "here."

March fifteenth

The rain beat into our faces
Washing off the dust of old lovers
Left us naked, clean sweet.
The sweet taste of rain
Warm skin touching
Soft hands searching
Sweet shower.
Raining harder
Icy fingers
Hot skin clinging
hearts beating
rain beating
rain drowning
harder, harder
raining harder
harder—Drowned!
God—
Silence.
Listen,
Night bird singing
A single crystal drop
flows down my rain-streaked cheek.
I never cried for Paul again.

April eighteenth

The whole long month he's come to me
But I have stolen back my I.
And so gave back our borrowed "We."
So fine to stand again as "Me."

May the first

Growing silence of the falling mist calls.
I answer "here."

May twenty-third

I had a dream
and in that dream
women stood with wormy bowls
and begged for food
And children cried near broken walls.
I saw the seed go in the ground
and send up naught but dust and dung
I saw a twisted garish grin
Upon a face above a gun.
I saw the lines and lines of guns
Which boomed out "love" with perfect gui
And I awoke and knew the lie.
I was to have a child
and on that day I knew God died.

May twenty-eighth

I felt my mind shrink up and fold
the corners up into a sphere
And spiral off through all my limbs
In front of me behind my face.
I felt my fingers folding up,
My legs pull in,
My skin withdraw
I saw a tail grow from my bowels
And on my arms there spread out wings
I joined with bird and beast in me
And flew away, my feet sharp-hooved.
I saw the place where once was me
And knew I'd never been at all—
I saw the garments that were mine
Drop off and fall into the sea
I saw the waters rise and fall
And cover up the naked flesh
Which sucked it in through every pore
And spat it back in streaks of blood
I saw I looked like endless sky
Which had not dimmed to light a star.
I knew I'd never lie so deep
I would not stand above it all—
I saw that what had once stood light
Upon the world it could have had
Had taken up the guise of man
And like a man it had gone mad.
In madness I cry out to you
And know no you to which to cry.
There is no soul in gods nor man
To match the one I just saw fly.
It was not mine for there's no Me
But it was once my Used-to-be—
I am no more.

June first

Eight pills and now
I lay me down to sleep
I pray dead God my soul to keep
For I shall die to never wake
And have no God my soul to take.
I walk through the valley,
The shadow of death
Covers me, Amen.

June second

I did not die
The baby died—
I lost my child
A part of me
And it was though I killed myself—
An incompleated jellied blob.

I cannot move

Long slow days...

All June I watched
The blue of veins
and muscles
beneath my skin.
July I watched the droning fly.
August—I can't remember,
The rain came in September.
October broke the trees—
I watched the leaves.
November brought the snow,
I think I breathed.
December—I don't know,
I think I stirred.

January first

Slip away the cold gray mist
Which shrouds the naked trees
In black lacquered silence
That chills the bird who preens his feathers
On the limb
Which makes his preening
Futile.

Slip away the cold gray mist
Which congeals to icy drops
To hang motionless on drain pipes
Slip away the cold gray snow
Which froze and turned to dirty slush
making us shake our chilled feet.

Slip away the cold gray time of winter
So I can see the sun
So I won't crack
The frozen corners of my mind
If
I should smile.

March first

Shopping for new clothes
Boys smiled their approval.
Tonight I did my hair.

March thirteenth

Painting in the park
I felt the branches growing in my arms
Green leaves tinted the paper
Canvas crinkled into a trunk
and the pigments flowed like water.

March eighteenth

A dream.

There was a strange and lonely spirit
Wandering up from wells of mountains
Watching rocks grow up before him
Like black buckets hand on hand.
So he wandered up for seconds
from that hollow in the mountain
Where the sky was cut in jaggers
And the moon would never shine.
Finally while moving upward
Stubbed his foot and tumbled down
To find most strange
The dirt he swallowed
Tasted almost like the sky.

April first

The light burst wide the blackened sky
and burning curled the paper night
and I stepped out and saw the light
and it was good.
And it was morning and it was evening—
the first day.

April second

The polished sea split wide the sky
and thinly sliced the sheet of blue
I looked and saw the sharp blue line
and it was good.
And it was morning and it was evening—
the second day.

April third

The sea was gathered in a stream
And on the banks were spewed the seed
The trees sought shade beneath the trees
And it was good.
And it was morning and it was evening—
the third day.

April fourth

The seasons come again to spring
The year has latticed off the flow
To squares of all the months and days
and it is good.
And it was morning and it was evening—
the fourth day.

April fifth

Like a soft cool tender crying
Birds sing with the ending rain,
Sing of something that is dying,
Sing of something born again.
I dined tonight on silver fish
that stared at me with yellow eye.
Be fruitful fish and multiply
for you are good.
And it was morning and it was evening—
the fifth day.

April sixth

At the zoo the lion was curled;
The deer had taught her young to stand.
I took my brother's pudgy hand;
Laughingly we fed the goats
and trotted back to tease the seal.
Skipping in step I thought it grand
that God had stopped his work with man
For it is good.
And it was morning and it was evening—
the sixth day.

April seventh

And heavens and earth were built for me
And I bless all that has been done
For God exists in days and birds
and in the grin above the gun
and in the fish and in the sun
and in the dust and in the sea
and in myself there is a part
which makes of me a part of God.
And now I lay me down and rest
And it is good.
And it was morning and it was evening—
the seventh day.

May twenty-sixth

Secret silence of the rising mist calls
I answer "here."

May thirty-first

Sanity, sanity, we paid for sanity
Gave the penny for the pain of knowing
Rip out your eyes Oedipus seeing
Van Gogh heard the sluttish scream
Earless, hearing.
Beethoven heard the soundless music
Blind Homer saw the gods.
It was the suffering
and the blood blood
which bled through the hands of Assisi
that washed away the cataracts
and separates living from life.
We had cried the last ululation
The animal devoured the cage
Once free as wild-eyed animals
We stalked the world of the vivisected
until we came to the crossroads
and were crucified to be saved.

June third

Tick tick, tick tick,
one step
a smile
fingertips
behind my ear
hand dropped
dumb
shy
tick tick tick, the clock,
one step
lips touch
too long
I move away
tick tick tick, the clock
"I love you now"
it falls
I turn to see
the floor
tick tick tick, the clock
Our eyes ask
"Who are you?"
"A stranger"
touch
tick tick tick, the clock
I understand
tick tick, tick tick

I feel
tick tick
I know
tick tick
I love
tick tick, tick tick, tick tick
I love
I love
I love
tick tick
the clock
tick tick
the clock
tick tick
the clock
stops—

July twenty-eighth

The silent time of the coming
The waiting is the going
The stopping is the growing.
I lie still.
Haunting silence of the rising mist calls
"In front, behind?"
I answer.
"Above, below?"
I answer.
Haunting silence of the rising mist calls.
We answer,
"here."

September second

There is an answer in the wood
and yet there is no question.
The trees stand where they first sprung root
The stream moves in complete accord
Each drop merged with the one before
Each leaf its place,
Each pebble its own sanctuary hill.
The question? The question?
There is answer in the wood
And yet there is no question.

It was a hot summer afternoon. Mike and his grandfather were walking on the railroad tracks. Mike stopped frequently to throw rocks into the ponds on either side of the gravel bedding and to offer drinks of water to his grandfather from the quart fruit jar his grandmother had given to them for the hike. The water tasted clean and sweet in the afternoon heat.

Although Mike knew it was wrong to have such thoughts, he wished, each time his grandfather accepted a drink, that he would not swallow so much. Mike wanted the water for himself. He thought about how his family always seemed to enjoy giving to others and he wondered why he liked to get more than to give. He felt bad and hated them for the good things they did that hurt him for not doing.

Mike looked up at the side of his grandfather's head and saw that he was absorbed in the walking. His face was pointed forward and his head bounced with each step. He seemed to be staring at the pinpoint the converging rails made on the horizon.

"Grandad, they're all bastards for doin good things an makin me feel like I should do good things too."

"Aye?"

"Oh...nothin."

Mike's grandfather looked down at the boy with a frowning expression of confusion. He had not understood Mike's statement because he was almost deaf. Mike knew that his grandfather was hard of hearing. It was fun for him to curse in the presence of an adult, especially one considered good, fine, and righteous like his grandfather. The words seemed to have more meaning then. Mike's grandfather had not heard him say the word "bastards" and if he had it was unlikely that he would have remembered its meaning. However, had he remembered its meaning, he probably would not have remembered to report his grandson's cursing to Mike's mother when they returned from the walk. Mike's grandfather was virtually incapable of remembering anything.

Mike felt bad for having taken advantage of the old man. He offered him a drink of water and stood watching him as he tilted his head back with the jar to his mouth. Mike wondered if his own adam's apple went

up and down like his grandfather's was doing. Mike thought his grandfather had a nice adam's apple. He began to feel sorry for his grandfather as he stood watching him drink. He thought about how much he loved his grandfather. Whenever Mike loved one of his relatives he would wonder about the death of that person. He associated death with pain and suffering and the most horrible thing that he could imagine would be to see one of his loved ones suffering before he died. No one Mike had known had ever died. No one except his mother ever talked to him about death and that was just to tell him that when a person dies his soul goes to heaven. Mike did not understand this. It told him nothing about dying. He would picture their faces in agony and become sick with fear. It felt to Mike like something inside him was ripping into terrible little pieces when he thought about one of them dying. Mike could see his grandfather in agony as he drank the water. It made Mike want to hug him and cry on his chest and beg him not die.

He imagined his grandfather being killed right that instant in the bright afternoon sunlight.

Mike swung his head around suddenly and his heart started thumping as he realized the possibility. Just that morning his grandfather had been in "one of his moods." Mike wondered if he was the same way this afternoon. He put his hand under his grandfather's arm and began unconsciously to walk faster. He stopped at lessening intervals to turn and squint down the rails. Mike thought that as a last resort he could probably tackle his grandfather but he wondered what effect his ninety-five pounds would have upon his grandfather's hundred eighty. It seemed to Mike that by some freak mistake in fate all the responsibilities of the universe had been given to him. He was not even sure he wanted any responsibilities. He began to ask himself, "Why, why have they, who are older and are supposed to know so much, ever let the two of us out on these tracks all alone when Grandad is sick like this?" Now it did not matter. He was out there and knew that there would be no one but himself. Mike prayed, "Please please please dear Jesus an God, don't let any come. I love You an I love Grandad an I'm sorry I said all those

cuss-words an ev'rything. I promise I'll be good an I'll love Mama too. Please..." Mike had worked himself into terror thinking about it. He turned around and looked back quickly. He turned again. "Oh no no NO!" He had seen a light flicker and then cut off and then turn into a steady yellow-white glow. Mike knew of only one light that was bright like this on a sunny day. He threw the water jar into the pond. He could feel his heart beating in his throat and temples. Trying to speak calmly, he said, "Grandad, let's go down by the side of the tracks."

"Aye?" His grandfather smiled at him.

"Let's get off the tracks," Mike repeated with an edge in his voice.

"Aye? You want to get off the tracks?"

"Yeah. Yeah, that's it. Let's go."

"What for, Mikey?"

"There's a train comin, Grandad! Please."

"Aye?"

"Oh you deaf, stupid ol fool, GET OFF THE TRACKS!"

"Hey hey now. You know you shouldn't talk like that, Mikey."

"GOD DAMN YOU! WE'LL BE KILLED!" His grandfather stared at him, not comprehending. He could not believe that

his grandson was talking to him like this.

"Mikey, I don't understand. What's the trouble, son? Are you all right?"

"HELL NO, I'M NOT ALL RIGHT! GET OFF THE TRACKS!"

They were standing facing each other between the rails. Mike's head was in constant motion as he looked from his grandfather to the light. He planned the exact spot on his grandfather's chest where he would suddenly shove him with his opened hands. Something stopped him. He was surprised to find himself afraid of his grandfather—afraid of harm from him. Now the light was surrounded by a growing silhouette. Mike could feel the vibration coming through the rails to the tie on which they stood. He was not particularly afraid of standing there until the last second. He knew he could get out of the way. But this was different, now there were two bodies he must move. Sweat was dripping into his eyes and his arms had never felt so heavy and he was getting dizzy and...

The train's horn sounded with an echoing BLAT... BLAT-BLAAAAAAAAAAT!

Mike's grandfather looked at the oncoming locomotive, took the boy by the arm, and walked off the tracks.

VOICES

by Kay Grimes

Silver mist blowing across a crimson sky
Until the last thin lights blaze and die.

Then we walked in a close shining haze
So deep that I could only hear the voice
That sang of lonely dragons who cried
For friends from the highest attic windows.

But when bright crimson flowed into the sky,
Drowning all but a necklace of silver,
The dragons slithered away to dark attics
And the voice laughed, and sang no more.



by Jim Forbes

SKETCHBOOK DRAWING
Ink, 11 x 16

A Loved a Long the Riverrun

by Walter Daniel Kuhne

It is the same told of all. Many.

- Finnegans Wake

To have gathered from the air a live
tradition or from a fine old eye the uncon-
quered flame

-The Cantos of Ezra Pound

for Rudd Fleming

* * * * *

I.

Envoi Go, churlish song!
Tell her that's young
And knows youth ephemeral to be:
Had'st thou her beauty,
In the minds of men

Thou would'st live immortally.

Tell her that knows
One day our "dusts with Waller's"
Must find their lair:
Had'st thou the power to suppose
That thou might check the fleeting hour,
Then would'st thou bid her:
"Stay awhile, thou art so fair."

Hearauld sound! Your horn! Hereo's Coming!
From loast to again. Rejoyce land! And see! Ongird
your Wallears en list heare. Why you know as well as.
Aye! How Everyknight Comes againcourting and thryst
onetwo: his amour shining, his pallette polished, a
richer lovelance in his lace, shiverly in his shoes but
his gorget raised, dubbed with doubtlets, but nowing
faint heardt never woon fair maidend (Lookout!), lacking
the aireate of a laureate or meddlesome but give his
worlds a chance, stoop to thees providential dialectic.

What scence? Whir? O yes, moi ausee it now:
Seeranew s'words! What a bawrd knight this has been!
Whin he wend on light light in the nightynight tilt she
would say to him dent cross my moat for if eeny One
knew, knaively playing hertrump, castling her pearious,
painging her breaths, and Disluteing her ayes joust so.
And he, stayidfast as a three, aints innes paints (cue);
Oh, that's jest Danty! And she shoving in bye trowthell!
Groanwaldt you errants (Cueclue, meh be)

Welt. That's knot so bad. Butt! The fists! The clayshing and nashing of. The brueghal mismatching of. A'tellyai they gotta terriblita lippi. Could you pollaiuos-sibly pursuepport me as an ars, test ! (Shutters!) Bottegame as I am. Who? You, storriest of synthetici-zers! You, Gravesrober! You, ho, ars and myrage go together like a hoarse miscarriage!

Poleaxed like Jack's son he struck it out. Heroanonymuse botched! See the clouets de lioness for the nixtneckst? Of course? The spinning and spanning: where maker meets match they merge to more to be met and mix again. Clash and spian! So laughlest now. For I fade and fall. Out!

II.

Au musee
She admires each painting for a suitable time,
Elegantly turns, affects a graceful glide,
For she too has admirers-
Madame X
Beauty in the pallid flesh
Lacking but the regal carriage
 the opulent dress
And another age
Sargent might have immortalized her
Personfied poise, tact, grace, etc.
The finer things -
 things that she is
 others will never hope to be

O

gatheryegatheryegatherye
rosebuds while ye may for she was a phantom of
delight now dead and gone forever from my sight
forevermore and always I'll remember this bleak
december now lamenting for the lost as a thing I
now can see no more turn wheresoere I may be day
or black night and now for a pallid bust of Pallas
to match my Nefertiti and then for a raven to sit upon
my chamber door to cast the shadow of the past on
another soul spilled miserably
 on the floor.

Slushy with filthy snow- the downtown streets,
Churned by Christmas shoppers,
Lamp posts affronted with artificial wreaths
 Eyes glazed,
 Gray stubble showing
 Over a beard of silky white,
 Sallow the face
 Dirty the hand
 Ringing a bell
 Merry Christmas

Quit this unreal land
Can I help you she asked
And he, hypnotized by the hollid nameplate
She wore. Where? Can I help you?
We wish you a Merry Christmas
Others wait. She scurries away
To tend to the attractions of
The business world. When

I must move on

Here-

Here with Vincent;

au musee

Faded watercolor of people on a beach

A pair of rough, old shoes

A landscape with cypresses-

One to guard this sacred grove

Here, one dead among the living

au musee

Oh he's wonderful, beautiful!

Oh so beautiful!

Oh he's wonderful she said knowing beauty and
Vincent and startling me I hadn't realized she was
there or had come in unaware I was shocked it
seemed so sudden and surprised I was who was she
but beautiful her face and delicate she stunned me
and again I knew in that moment I knew mystic and
elated so suddenly what wonder we talked and talked
ecstatic again but God I felt as though I were at one
with what but how to say I felt as though we might
show and share our hearts and souls and alive again
to live again and knew through meeting her joy again
and awake with life again my mind again my flesh
again again and again

Falls now the quiet snow

On his face as he walks home

As these trees

Each love and joy a bursting blossom

Mellowing, then falling and dying

Then dormant we stand in snow and ice

With what clings yet

In our hearts

That spring may come again

THE COMRADE

by Peter Laska

I confess I have urged you onward with me
and still urge you, without the least idea what
is our destination. W.W.

In absence, in memory
individuals, coalescing, flowing
out of the one under unknown pressures

Individuals, dismembered
spread out like liquid on a table
disappearing in the rolling level surface, the rush and hum

Individuals! awake
at night, withdrawn, silent
vibrating within, each at the hub, the center

Remember! days of desire
sunrise, sunset, incandescent thrills
dumbfounded before trees, grass, sky and the madwoman—the moon!

Hours you raved like Ahab obsessed
and led me out into the night that throbbed
with the bleatings of cicadas or was quiet with the silence of death.

Couldn't stand our own minds
grappling with solitude on concrete streets
want to love, love woman, love anyone, ourselves not enough

Remember! we met across oceans like strangers
and considered ourselves friends above a carryout,
dissembled five months between dull yellow walls my vision was Villon

You said, "I am one
Call me everyone! I meet myself
on high cliffs above the city where the highway leaps into the sky!"

What cries went out!
Riding the buses all night!
What gnawed at your heart and brain!

Sent you trailing scents of love!
that dissolved with the glowing out of windows
on slick cold steel tracks and the long gleam of headlights

Lone taxicabs and buses brought you
revolving into daylight, dreams scattered like confetti
sheets sticking to your back, Sunday mornings quivered where to go

Remember! you and I in cold weather in the city
that was never still, in our hollow room with broken chairs
from the hammers rising, clanging, till shutters slammed night on us

Prostrate eagles! eyes glassy
sick over whores and the butcher and daylaborers
and the callous movement of knuckles on the sidewalk

I turned up the radio
to drown out the asthmatic cough next door
Then lay back, lay still in the dark, giving up, going far adrift

Woke up sweating under wool blankets
frost twisting on the windows, light snow falling
went out upon the cold city, soaring over rooftops with swallows

Caught a chill
My lungs hurt, I crawled home
through white silent streets black with pain

Trembled when old rusted life
head moldy, gone green on the ear, grabbed my arm
pinched me into samples, drops of blood, bits of hair and skin

Remember! I hesitated at the door
of your room as though to find courage to go in
then laughed when you sat up, smiling, and asked me how I'd been

April lisped a soft rain
Something stirred under the pale flattened grass
and ferreted tastes and smells I had hidden and hidden from

When we met again
at midnight in front of the automatic laundry
you seemed to be different, or was it I that had changed

Remember! you told me
to know a thing you must touch it and feel
its shape, and you can never love what you can't touch

Remember! you went
watching the moon, to see thing in things
and things through things, I watched you watching the moon.

He lay in an unkept bed, on top of the crumpled sheets, smothering his face in the soiled, slightly greasy pillow case. He thought of the unmade bed as a loose woman, unclean, with matted hair, on whose oily, fetid breast he could rest his sobbing head, oblivious to the scholar's hushed, insistent voice and the garrulous pedantry of his fellows. He wrenched himself from the bed in disgust, as from legs and arms and a hot belly. He stood up and made scrubbing movements with his fingers through his own thick, matted hair. He breathed with heavy, sucking gasps, as though his lungs were full of sea water or he were inhaling tissue or ash instead of air. He sat back in the general direction of the bed, placing his elbows on his knees and his face in the damp hollow of his hands, and ran his fingers over the irregular type-face of beard covering his throat and chin. He slid his tongue along his teeth and coughed, tasting stale cigarettes and metal.

He returned to the book open on his desk, looked once at the lines of run-on letters and caterpillar words, the blurs of meaning like hummingbird wings, and closed his eyes. He felt as though he were inside an accordion and someone were playing madly, forcing the walls to fold in and out. The page under his lamp fell away, purred through space, always just beyond the reach of his outstretched mind.

The toilets in the dormitory flushed with comfortable regularity. Warm air whispered in the heat ducts. It was nine of a Friday evening. The ordeal of final exams was too distant to inspire fear or even anxiety; the subject of most term papers had only been changed once. Gregory's dormitory resembled an abandoned hive. It had been deserted with neglectful and sloven urgency. Only a few furtive creatures remained, two recently jilted lovers with crushed flower faces, three misfits and a round-peg with two heads and a terrific ping-pong back-stroke, one devout theosophist, and perhaps a score of men absorbing the incidental knowledge of three thousand years in their climb to the deferential regard of the World, the praise of their mothers. Adam Goldberg, an acquaintance of Gregory's, was among the most brilliant of these. He was not engaged in a disinterested search for Truth, an impossible

pursuit for a Jew whose family bought on time but could not borrow on eternity, even in America, whose father prayed twice daily for one thing and only one thing and who, if not heard by God was heard by his son, his intelligent son, whose mother wept with missing her boy, her tatela, and trembled at sight of his thin and haggard figure, but calculated with a shrewdness hardly maternal his Grade-Point Average from the shading of his eyes.

It was late November, an especially significant evening for every one at the University, for both those who had left and those occupied in the dormitories. Nearly everyone studying felt particularly martyred. It was Walpurgisnacht, the fraternity doors were opened to all, and the liquor closets unlocked in an overwhelming display of magnanimity. The Hi-Tones rocked and rolled and starred the starless night with percussions and repercussions, brass instruments and brass voices. Thin, taunt lips relaxed around the mouths of bottles, blood that trickled through the intellect swelled to cataracts. Proud male songs of brotherhood, fraternal lust, shattered glasses and delicate, pearl-hung ears. A few girls powdered their noses and cheeks, clouding their blushes, but most accepted, laughed, and forgot. Orgys were harmless fun, and words can never hurt you.

Omega Epsilon Pi
Sigma Beta Chi
Ha Ha

Harry across the hall had invited Gregory to go wassailing. He belonged to one of them. Which one?

Gregory's hands felt vague and undefined, as though his arms ended at his wrists and the muscle faded into air, as though the blood evaporated, leaving a frail litmus stain. The nerves of his legs threaded the needle of his ankles and withered in his toes. The decision settled on his mind like a feather floating down an hour glass, like a second or a leaf falling softly into a mattress of dust or brown grass. His pulse was like a wave of hair.

It was not actually raining. A fitful drizzle seeped from the sky like sweat. The air was heavy, boozy, fermenting. The night

smelled of hops. The dead trees perspired. The fraternity house windows were thrust open. The casements were clustered with damp heads and panting faces. The gloom rumbled like a muffled cymbal. Gregory entered through a side door and followed the crooked, stumbling hallway down to a tiled and panelled room where beer was being served. Most of the revellers were just above him, stamping on the floor. Of those who remained in the basement, most were sitting on benches against the walls guzzling beer, wretching loud and inarticulate sounds at one another. Gregory stood to the side in the shadow of the coat-rack. Someone had thrown a bowl of potato chips on the floor. Half-finished bottles of liquor foamed over the tiles, and the chips, like fish-heads and refuse, floated on the scummy backwater. He turned quickly and struggled up the stairs, hugging the wall opposite a pair of flailing lovers whose hot and nervous embrace parodied Rodin's Kiss.

The band rasped out frenetically. The noise beat upon his ears like a strangled cawing. A make-shift wooden stage had been raised at the front of the large, hall-like room which served the fraternity for merry-making and making Mary, as the punning brothers put it. The dancers were in the navel of a twist when Gregory, with a look of consternation on his face, entered the room. The singer was a blond, about twenty. Her features were iced with make-up. She was prancing about the stage, limbering up her hips for the next number. She smiled facetiously at a small group of fraternity brothers leaning on a nonchalant piano, posing their cool, sophisticated drinks before their lips. Below the dusky faces of the musicians, the lurid faces of the dancers shone in trickles of light. Their bodies contorted, skirts and coat-tails flapped as though alive. They wiggled their behinds like sperm their tails. A strange, bright pride glazed their eyes. Each dancer served as a fleshy mirror for his partner, in which he gazed with obscene delight at his own lewd, jerky posturing. Gregory stood against the wall, watching with meek, bewildered absorption. He watched sex dragged by her fair dark hair into the middle of the dance floor. He saw her nailed there with a spotlight, saw her stripped and violated. His eyes hardened, as those of a helpless supplicant standing before a desecrated image. He loathed their bloated faces,

their polluted pleasures, their mortifying voices. There was no sensuality in this, no dark-throated promisc. He felt nothing but shame, shame in his secret parts, and disgust. He hated them, hated them for their sophistication, their indifference. They experimented with one another. They were insouciant and free. They took no pride in their bodies, only in their wills. There were two couples with love of carnal beauty, and possibly, love of one another, only two whose movements balanced each other in the smooth, reciprocating flow of their limbs. They never touched, but the space around them glowed, enveloped them in a soft, plastic medium of contact. But in the others, where was his splendor, his innocent and transcending ecstasis, perfect being, a moment's dying, the lambent death?

"Hey, Gregory! Okay fellas...give a girl a little breathing room. Gee." Carol Langston fought off her bulky admirers as best she could. She had seen Gregory's tall, somnolent figure across the spinning room. Carol was happy, just and only and completely happy. She was good-looking, talented (an ambiguous word in the descriptive vocabulary of the male student), appealing. Her champagne hair spilled all over her shoulders, and her eyes were pools of spring rain and floating lilies. She had a pair of legs the like of which had not been seen since the hey-day of Greta Garbo. She was the object of much male sighing, the incendiary spark of virile longing, the apple of her wealthy father's eye. She knew that forbidden fruit is the most desired: would permit a caress, but rejected the hot, impassioned embrace which would bruise her flesh. As the young college man recounted his latest amorous adventure, with disappointment, wistfulness, and pride: "Well boys, when you go out with quality, you've got to settle for a little less—" such was Carol, who would slip her dove-pink tongue between male lips reluctantly, and only on a very special occasion.

She bobbed toward Gregory, swept along by the sea of dancers, smiling in a pleased and rather excited manner. They were taking philosophy together. They praised Nietzsche with fitting encomiums, scorned hapless Plato. She envied Gregory his detachment, his intellect, his dark, dark eyes. There was a high ball in her hand, and the condensation on the glass dripped onto her full,

taffeta skirt, leaving dark patches on the turquoise sheen. She stood in front of him, holding the glass high in a mocking gesture, an ironic greeting.

"Libations for the High Priest. Has the anchorite quitted his forbidding cave? Oh Zarathustra, herald of the superman, I, woman, lowly instrument of thy pleasure, welcome thee into this den of iniquity!" Gregory's face shammed an appropriate and appreciative smile. His features melted.

"Hi there, Constance (they had also talked of Lady Chatterly), met any eligible gamekeepers lately?"

"Good gamekeepers are hard to come by these days," she replied, winking.

He smiled, groped for an appropriate retort, and settled for the smile.

"Does the recluse indulge?" she asked, offering her glass.

"What is it?"

"Whiskey and soda. It's great!"

He grasped the glass and held it up speculatively toward a tear of light. He lowered the drink to his lips and swallowed, forcing the shivering liquid down his throat until he had emptied the glass.

"Wow! You drink like a fish," she exclaimed, admiring, shimmering.

"Never underestimate a Philosopher," he replied, smiling a tight, painful smile.

"Would you like to dance?" she asked, extending her small, philosophical hand. He held it tightly in his large pagan fist.

"But I don't twist."

"You don't Twist?" she queried, in mock disbelief. Of course you twist, everybody does. There's nothing to it. I'll show you."

She tugged at his hand gently, pulling him into the middle of the dance floor.

"Wait a minute. What you need is another drink." She danced over to a portable bar, slipping between the flying bodies with a soft bump and grind of her boyish hips. She laughed and pushed at a reeking male figure that tried to embrace her, grabbed another high ball, and returned. Gregory mused, considering the fate of his precarious drink, considering Carol, a nice girl, considering... showing them how ugly they are.

"Here," she said, "bet you can't do that again."

"Tempting God again, Satan?" There had been a momentary lull in the music. Three or four couples watched with the startled

admiration of a circus crowd before the fire eater as Gregory drained the glass.

"Christ!" they shouted, and two congratulatory slaps landed on his back.

He was on a rocket spinning above an amusement park of somersaulting trees. He was descending from the summit of a roller coaster through tumbling clouds. He was exploding into the exultant lash of the whip, hurtling through the fun house into the clutches of Frankenstein. He was Pan and Gargantua and the old lecher Karamazov, and Carol undulated through the circle of his arms, taunting him, shedding veils. He touched her breasts in a drunken and clumsy caress, staggered as she faded, laughing.

"Are you all right?" she yelled down at him, laughing.

"Sure, I'm okay. Just bruised my pride a little," he replied, rubbing his behind as he lifted himself up from the floor.

"You know what?" he yelled.

"No, what?" she yelled back.

"I'm going to give a poetry recitation!"

The Hi-Tones were twisting the smoke-filled room around him, shattering the light with their brass instruments as he climbed from a chair to the top of a table. Nearly everyone stopped dancing and clustered around, clapping and screaming. Gregory raised his arms and screamed through the cawing music.

"Bitches and Bastards—I am about to recite for your distraction a poem by that much maligned poet and lover David Herbert Lawrence."

The oblivious Hi-Tones continued to play. The revellers yelled and jostled, chanting and clapping: "Go Go Go. Yea Law..rence."

Let's twist again like we did last summer,

Y-e-e-h, twist again like we did last year.
And who has seen the moon, who has not seen
Her rise from out the chamber...

Y-e-e-h, twist again like we did last year
of the deep

Flushed and grand and naked,
as from the chamber
Of finished bridegroom...

Do you remember when
we were really hummin',

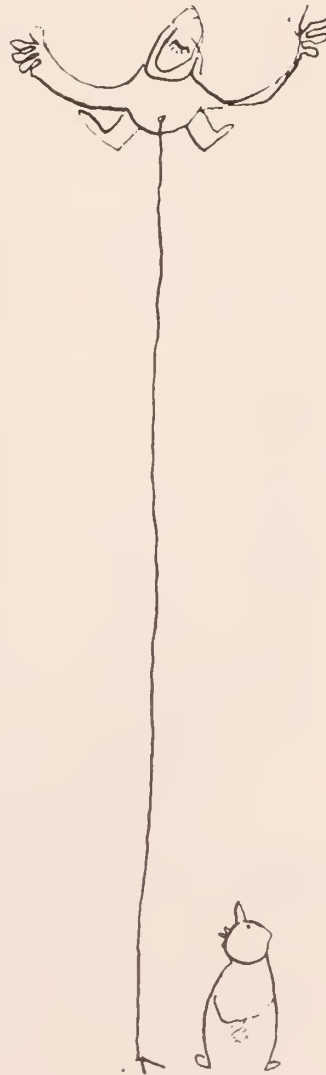
Y-e-e-h, twist again like we did last year
seen her rise and throw
Confession of delight upon the wave.
Littering the waves...

Let's twist again like we did last year...
with her own superscription
Of bliss,
till all her lambent beauty shakes toward us,
Spread out...

Do you remember when...
and known at last, and we are sure...
we were really hummin'
That beauty is a thing beyond the grave,
That perfect bright experience...

Y-e-e-h, twist again...
never falls
To nothingness, and time will dim the moon
like we did last year!
Sooner than our full consummation here
In this odd life will tarnish or pass away.

The silence shifted its weight from the right
to the left foot.



DRAWING
by Jim Forbes

PATRICIA LEIST

IMPRESSIONS OF NOW. TODAY.

In this room too—
the strange, sad order
into which I look, seeing
what I have had to become
to tolerate the womb
of the time
of waiting.

Taking
injection of pleasure—
daily to keep things alive—
the forcing onto the face
of movement,
reminding one that he
lives in-spite-of.

Regular commonplaces,
filling up the spaces
of no contentment,
face the struggling spirit
on equal grounds.

Front page issues—
common terror having turned
to the expected—
death is palpitated
without exclamation.

out in the yard
there are playing-children
and a breeze
gives the curtains
their perverbial flutter—
there is some sanity.

(golden,
coming-autumn
whispers to us
from the dead-center
of heat.

recline now, and listen
and allow the breeze.)

To kindle a fire there
and to soothe.

Fairy kisses
fall short.

There are no cremes
to cover these blemishes
That have brought distaste
So strong that sweetmeats foul
in their breath.

Too bad for those who have tasted.
Hon, your sugar-smile is wasted.

That cloud breathes too heavily.

Now, for the coming events,
We must have theatre.
We must put the sun up
in the morning,
If there is going to be a sun.
It will fall by itself—
Only look away for a moment.

Hon, bring on your sugar-smile.
Stage some living for a while.

We need you in a way
Quite pressing.
Garcon, some wine—
And, Wait!
Tell us something fine...

Please do,
You have stage ability,
Or maybe wine is all you've tasted.
Someone there ! !
Oh, do construe something pretty!
I looked away for a moment.

The music of the sound
of word perfection—
songs of the right phrase
ring through ears
stirring sensual powers
as we take
from the vast
an image—
a knife on pure crystal.

and then we love,
and an orchestration of feeling
leaves us powerless
even in the wake of this truth
and we gaze openly
relaxed into a smile;
the sweet crystal chiming
need no longer be perfect.

It could start again
here -
here at the S M
with the beat
heat
of guitar
and haze of thought
fuming out
 into
 l'air de tabacs
and hot breath
riding up to dim light—
Impressions.
the blues
turning to jazz at 2.
 the animated face
 of one of the singers
 something to notice.
We awaken
to relive again
the old moments.
there is a special hush
for one
of them,
 jumping
into focus
in the genuine
life of the right note—
song of a real life—
coming from a hill.
to bound
out of a fair lip
of a live song.

Gentle barrier
to the limp brain—
attention to the right thing
finally brought back.

fingers to the touch
so real as to be
unattended
by premeditation
and effort.

We scream out
for this
and die in its wake
as we begin again.

FROM TENDERNESS OUT
(INTO LIGHT
INTO THE MIGHTIEST FREEDOM)

We have formed this:
 Separation into an Ugliness
 that pervades
 forming a hard core
 from which comes
 no tenderness.

(remember your need
and its power.)

* * *

Throw away the stones and go
far into the darkest
of nights
of untold comfort
(put your faith in the Untold)
of nights
and an obsession
 (knowing all along that I
 am this,
 that I do this
 that I cannot hide it
 nor want to)

for tenderness,
met on an open plain
and easy.

(we do not even try
to make intellect easy.)

easily falling into the arms
of a lover
of a love.

(and with no need to beg.)

* * *

And o cry no more
as a heaven opens
as a Lilac wind encircles
and is no more envied

(even in its freedom
it could not compare.)

As we crossed the last range of mountains, the air took on the fresh biting smell of the sea. A few lights were scattered before us, winding down into valleys, misted over by the slow fall of rain. The small huts that we could see stood open, and inside several we saw families sitting, seemingly bound together by the soft glow of a small fire. This was unusual weather. Many of the homes here had no windows or doors, and the rare cool rains that swept down upon them from the mountains of the east were tolerated for the short time they were here. Stan rolled down the window of the car. Driving slowly now, for the road curved sharply in several places, we could hear snatches of music, the heavy strumming of a guitar, a high spirited singing of two or three male voices drifting up from the darkness. The road turned again, then leveled. Houses now began to appear closer to the highway, and several times we had to slow down to avoid running into someone who walked in our way. Old men with blankets pulled over their heads plodded through the darkness, off to the homes of friends or back to their own homes or just out into the night. Jack rolled the window down on his side and leaned out to shout at several young boys who, shirtless, splashed along in front of us, heedless of the approach of headlights behind them. And then we were by them and once more out away from the homes. As the rain slackened into a gentle spray of mist we picked up speed, dropping quickly down the mountain. The air seemed to be getting warmer.

"Around a couple of curves now, and you can see the bay," Jack proclaimed. When Jack told us anything he seemed to be delivering a prophecy. When I had first met him at school, his oratorical tone when discussing simple matters had bewildered me, but then I got used to it like any strange thing that is constantly repeated. Still, when at times he would enter a restaurant to order a tortilla or tacos, and the words would bounce from wall to wall, I would see the surprised faces of people as they looked up at this blond gringo who was slamming syllables into their ears.

Jack had been here before, and Stan lived near the ocean in California, so I didn't think that either of them would feel the anticipation I did. It had been two years since I had seen the Pacific, but at night, far inland, I could

still seem to hear the echo of the great roar of the waves breaking down a beach. But I noticed that now neither of them were saying anything. They seemed to have settled into a quiet watching, waiting for the curve that would put us within sight of our destination. And then there it was. A bend in the road, and far below us, shining like a gigantic necklace of lights around the great sweep of dark water, was the bay of Acapulco. Two pale green columns of light rose high above the city, twin spires of an unearthly color reaching up into the mist.

"Those two green lights down there are from the Hilton." Jack pointed at what we couldn't avoid seeing. Now the road was a straight shot to the bottom, a long drop to where the mountains ended in a flat narrow shelf that fell immediately into the sea. There was one main road skirting the edge of the bay, with smaller roads running from this back up into the hills. We turned and drove down through a long row of hotels, fantastic structures of stone and glass and metal that stood up around us like an unreal world after the miles of barren land we had just driven through. The rain now was little more than fog, blocking out the light from the sky, giving the light from the buildings a luminous quality that seemed to envelop them in a glowing gauze. The streets were nearly deserted, although it was only around midnight. Jack turned the car around and we started back up the other way.

"Let's go and get our hammocks before we do anything else." For two pesos, Jack had told us, we could rent a hammock for the night, complete with a bamboo-roofed hut. We pulled up in front of a sign that had been made from a few weather-beaten boards taken from the side of a ship, announcing that this was Condesa Beach, and that beer could be purchased here. The beach looked deserted. We parked the car and locked it, and went down the steps to the sand. We could see very little. The street lights didn't reach down here and there was no light from the sky. There were several huts scattered down the beach, one larger than the rest which appeared to be an area for serving meals and drinks. We stepped up onto the porch, presumably looking for the owner, I supposed. Jack had said nothing. Stan walked over to

what appeared to be a roll of blankets and nudged it with his foot. The roll of blankets groaned. Just then a flashlight was turned on from somewhere in the depths of the hut, shining on Stan's back and shoulders. Stan has the heavy build of a surfer, the muscles running smoothly from his neck through his shoulders and down into his arms. He turned to face the light, muttering and taking a step forward. The light went out, and we heard a shuffling in the darkness. Then the light came on again, and standing there beside us was one of the fattest, darkest Mexicans I had ever seen. In his right hand he held one of the big knives used for cutting coconuts.

"What you want, huh? What you want?" We explained to him that we wanted to stay in his hammocks for the night, and gave him six pesos. He grunted, put the money in the hand with the knife, and turned the light onto whatever it was that Stan had kicked. The pale, dry face of an American woman looked over the top of a blanket. She had the washed-out look of the women who spend their lives in bars, trying to hold their youth with make-up and loud talk. "Sleep," the Mexican grunted at her, then turned out the light and walked to the back of the hut.

We stepped down onto the beach, each of us picking a hammock and trying it out, then we got up and changed into our bathing trunks. The water was not far from us, and we could hear the heavy falling of the waves, but in the darkness we could only catch the white line of a wave's crest as it broke into a wall of foam. We walked down to the edge of the water, and here the light seemed to be better. The water licked up around us, spraying our faces with its salt. The sea was warm. Suddenly, as we stood there in the surf, a great wave rose up and fell like a wall, chasing us back up the beach. I looked at Stan.

"You see that?" Stan shook his head, puzzled. Waves aren't supposed to break like that. In California they break clean and slow, beginning a long way from shore and moving in with a smooth curl, pushing a surfboard before them until the wave becomes smaller and begins breaking up. But this one had just jumped up in front of us.

"Let's hit it," Jack proclaimed to Stan and me and the countryside in general, and he was off toward the water. We watched him dive in under a wave and then pop up on the other side, swimming in smooth powerful strokes away from us. The waves were not breaking now,

they were just sloshing up onto the sand. Perhaps that big one had been a freak. Stan and I looked at each other and shrugged, and then sprinted down into the water. I ran until the water was up around my knees, then I saw a swell coming in and went under it. The taste of salt was good, the buoyancy of the ocean a welcome change from the lakes and pools I had become familiar with. I looked for Stan and saw him off to my right, swimming like he appeared capable of doing, knifing through the water with his head low. I had never been able to master this smoothness in swimming. Every ten feet I traveled I worked for, but still this feeling of suspension, of floating, turning as if in a heavy wind, brought me back to the sea.

We swam out a hundred yards or so, and then paddled around. I had the feeling of being out in a great depth. Out here we could see the lights from the street where we had left the car, shining down around us as we bobbed up and down in the water. I tried a surface dive, going down deep into inky blackness, pulling myself straight down into the dark, but I knew that the way the beach had dropped off that the water here was not measured in feet. I came up and rolled over on my back, looking up at the cloud-covered sky. There was no rain at all now. Perhaps tomorrow it would be clear. I was curious to see what this looked like in daylight. The mountains that surrounded us could only be guessed at, their outline hidden away somewhere in the night. I rolled over again and started swimming slowly in toward shore. Jack and Stan were floating, paddling lazily. I turned to shout at them, but something stopped me, a sound, a sensation, I don't know what it was. A strange silence seemed to have come down over us, out in the stillness of the water. And then I heard it. It was a wave hitting the beach, not a slow rolling breaker, but a ton of water smashing down. I looked to the shore and saw the spray fly up, high enough to catch the lights from the street. I stopped swimming, staying where I was and paddling to keep afloat. Perhaps this was only one wave, like the other, and the surf would die down again. But as soon as that wave had passed, another one boomed in, lipping over in a huge roar and throwing a white foam into the sky. Then I began to notice the swells passing under me, big heavy rollers pushing a mass of water along with them, seeming to come in sets of three, the third swell the biggest. They

were hitting the beach in an even rhythm now, and their muted thunder had shattered the silence of a few moments before. We had been in the water perhaps fifteen or twenty minutes, and I wasn't too sure about my endurance. I swam over to where Stan was. He seemed to be listening to the same thing, watching the white line of the beach where the waves were breaking up.

"What do you think about it, Stan?" Only our heads were above the surface, but occasionally a swell would lift us high enough to see in as far as the darkness would let us.

"Can't tell yet if they're breaking far out or in close. If it's in close there's going to be some trouble getting by them. Let's just wait awhile."

So we waited. Jack swam over, and Stan told us that it was like this in Laguna, that the waves came in and smacked right down on the sand, but they didn't get this big and some people could ride them. He told us there was a trick to it, that once you got in the wave it would push you out in front of it and at the right time you could tuck your head and do a flip and, if you were lucky, come out feet first. We asked him if we could do that here and he said that he didn't think so, that these seemed too big and besides we couldn't tell yet where they were breaking. I was starting to get tired, so I rolled over on my back and rested. The swells kept rolling under us, showing no sign of letting up. After a while Stan started swimming toward the beach.

"Where you going?" Jack shouted.

"Let's go in and see what they're doing," Stan yelled back, and we started in for the shore and the big waves. I swam a few strokes and was surprised at how tired I was, so I went into a side-stroke, kicking and gliding, trying to save what energy I had. As we got closer to the beach the troughs started getting deeper, so that we couldn't see each other at times. The force of the swells was picking up, carrying us along with them when they came under us. The smash of the waves was getting louder, and we could hardly hear each other. I was getting more tired by the minute, and I knew that pretty soon I would have to go on in, big waves or not. Somehow it seemed lighter now, perhaps just our getting used to the dark, but we could see the waves rising up in front of us in great ridges. They were big. They were the biggest I had ever been in. And these were not waves that we could ride. They were throwing the whole impact of the great weight

of water they carried straight down onto the sand, digging into the beach as they hit and tossing a thirty foot spray into the air.

Stan was up close to me. I tried to shout down the noise.

"How's the best way to get through these, Stan?" He swam over closer where he could hear. "I said, how's the best way to get through these?"

"The only thing to do is to catch one and ride it as far as you can, and then when you see that it's breaking, start pushing yourself back out of it. It ought to carry you up on the beach. Don't get in front of it, though, or it'll dump you." He raised his voice over the crashing of the waves. "Are you going to try it now?"

"Yeah," I shouted, and started in. We were still forty yards out, but the waves were building up strong. I got up in a swell and rode with it a little way, then it went out from under me and I dropped down into the trough. I couldn't see a thing around me there but a wall of water in front and one behind me. Then the next swell came in and I got up on top of it. Now the beach was only about twenty yards away, and I knew that one of the waves coming up would be the one I would have to take in. The noise was tremendous. I had been in the surf before, but never breaking this close and this big. Another swell caught me and shoved me in further. I backed out of it and slid down into the trough, and then I knew that the next one was it. It came up behind me, and I glanced over my shoulder to judge its speed. And there behind me was one of the biggest waves that I had ever seen. It was like looking at a house bearing down on you. But I was in it. There was nothing I could do but swim, so I kicked with all the strength I had left, and felt the great mass of water lift me up, and in that moment I knew that I was too far in front of the wave. For what must have been a half-second, I was on top, looking down at the beach which seemed far below me, and then the wave started to break. I was pushed half-way out the front, looking straight down the face of a wall of water which was twice my height. And then it dropped me. I felt myself falling free, no longer caught up in the great power of the wave, but now turning in the air as the sand rushed up at me. I hit on the right side of my face and my right shoulder, the sand pushing into my mouth and scraping flesh off my arm. Then the wave fell, and I was flipped over and over through the boiling foam. It pushed me

up the beach, and then I felt the backwash taking me out again. I tried digging in, but the water pulled me along with it, carrying me back down to where the waves were breaking. Another one came down on top of me, and again I was caught in a rush of sand and water. I was too tired to fight it, and let it push me along like driftwood. I should have been trying to get out, to break free of this huge wash of water, but instead I felt sleepy, weary. A warm fog was settling down over me. I wasn't even trying to breathe anymore.

Then a great hand closed over my arm, and someone was pulling me up from the water. I looked up. It was the fat Mexican, grunting to himself as he tugged me along to the high part of the beach. I started shaking my head, spitting out sand and blood, choking up what I had swallowed. Then I was up on the dry sand, and the Mexican was pounding me on the back, asking me where my friends were. "—Sus amigos, donde estan sus amigos?"

"Out there," I mumbled, pointing vaguely toward the ocean.

He ran up the beach and came back with a long coil of rope. He tied one end around his abundant waist, handed the other end to me, and ran down to the water. At just this moment there was a flash of white at the top of a wave, and in that micro-second of silence before the wave hit I heard Jack's voice as he proclaimed his surprise. "Yow!" And then the wave dumped him, and he fell, as I must have fallen, straight down to the sand. The big Mexican was on him like a cat, wrapping his arms around him, and then a wave fell over them both, sweeping them along with it. I stood dumbly, holding the end of the rope,

not sure of my purpose. But then I felt the rope go tight in my hands, and somehow through my cloudy brain came the command to pull, and to pull hard. But I didn't have that much strength, and I felt the rope slipping away from me, so I tied it around my waist and sat down. Somehow I thought I should be doing something more, so I looked for something to hold onto, and saw one of the small huts a few feet away. I crawled over to it, and wrapped my arms around one of the poles. There was a strong tugging at the rope, and then it went slack. In a minute or so I saw the Mexican dragging Jack up the beach. Jack was breathing hard, trying to force the air into his lungs, but I saw that he would be all right. Slowly my senses were coming back to me. I stood up, and looked out over the water for Stan. The Mexican looked at me closely, nodded to himself, and started for the waves again, the rope still joining us. I caught a glimpse of Stan's head. He was swimming, but he was swimming parallel to the waves. Suddenly, as I watched, he turned toward the shore, and in a few swift strokes was up on the top of a swell, moving in toward the beach with it. And at the precise moment that it started to break, Stan backed out of it, pushing himself away from the lip of the wave and down its smooth back. It carried him in, settling him gently into the foam. And then the Mexican was there again, catching him before the backwash could get him, pulling him up through the waist-deep water. They came up the beach, an arm around each other's shoulder, and where the wash of water stopped its upward climb they turned to look out at the sea. The waves boomed in, a dark, hungry roar.

AWARDS

Evelyn Barbara Edelson receives this issue's poetry award for her long poem *ALCHEMY*. Evelyn is a 21-year-old English major who will graduate in June. She spent her junior year at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and in the winter traveled through Greece and most of Turkey, did some skiing in Yugoslavia, and somehow managed to get kidnapped in Bulgaria. During the summer she spent three months in Europe, hitchhiking with a girl friend through France and England. After graduation Evelyn would like to spend a year or so in the Far East. "Then I would have seen most of the world," she says, "and should be ready to be practical."

Four stories were strongly considered for the prose award, and finally the \$20 went to Bruce Sidwell for his satirical short story, *THE NEWSPAPER BOY*. Bruce was born in Hawaii where he spent most of his childhood. His family later moved to the mainland, where his father taught at Oregon State. Bruce has hitchhiked over a great part of the States, working at odd jobs occasionally. His interests at Maryland range through the fields of dramatics, psychology, radio broadcasting, and creative writing. Considering the skill he has developed in writing, one of the most unique things about him is his age. Bruce is 18.



SANDPIPER by Jay Graham



